

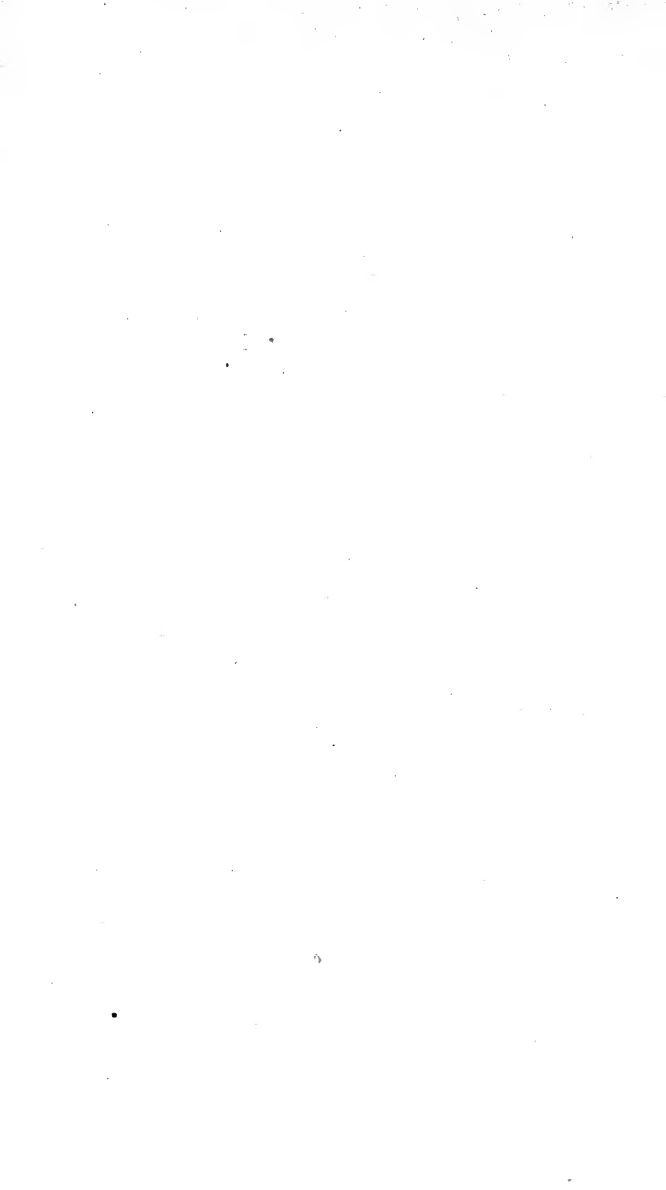


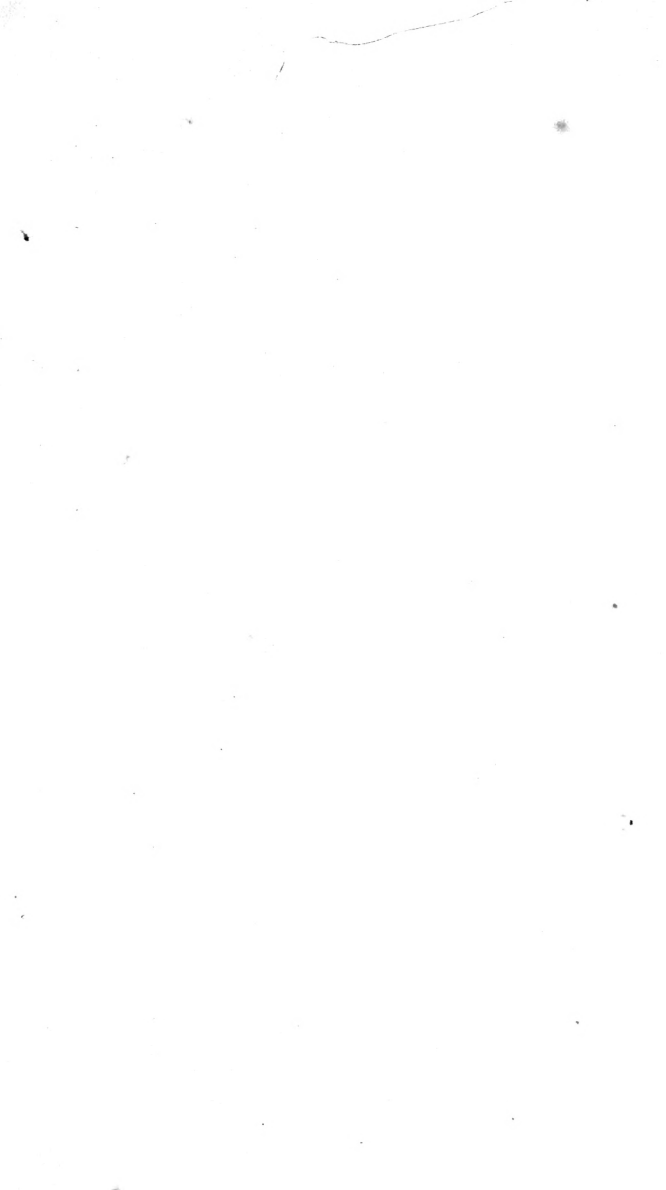
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PATRONAGE.



VOL. II.

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PATRONAGE.

BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "TALES OF FASHIONABLE LIFE," "BELINDA,"
"LEONORA," &c.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

"Without a Patron,—though I condescend
"Sometimes to call a Minister my friend."

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1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

PATRONAGE.

CHAPTER XV.

Letter from Alfred Percy to his Mother.

“ MY DEAR MOTHER,

I am shocked by your story of Kate Robinson.—I agree with you in rejoicing, that Caroline had sufficient penetration to see the faults of Buckhurst Falconer’s character, and steadiness enough, notwithstanding his agreeable talents, never to give him any encouragement. I agree with you also, that it was fortunate that her last letter

to him was written and sent, before this affair came to her knowledge. It was much better that she should abide by her objection to his general principles, than to have had explanations and discussions on a subject, into which she could not enter with propriety.

“ I will, as you desire, keep Buckhurst’s secret. Indeed, in a worldly point of view, it behoves him that it should be carefully kept, because Bishop Clay, the prelate, who gave him his present living, though he tolerates gormandizing to excess, is extremely strict with his clergy *in other matters*, and, as I once heard Buckhurst say,

“ Compounds for sins he is inclin’d to,
By damning those he has no mind to.”

Buckhurst had, I believe, hopes that Caroline would have relented, in consequence of his last overture; he was thrown into despair by her answer, containing, as he told me, such a calm and civil repetition of her refusal—that he

swears he will never trouble her again.— For a fortnight after, he protests he was ready to hang himself.— About that time, I suppose, when he heard of Kate Robinson's death, he shut himself up in his room for several days—said he was not well, and could not see any body. When he came out again, he looked wretchedly ill, and unhappy—I pitied him—I felt the truth of what Rosamond said, 'that there is such a mixture of good and bad in his character, as makes one change one's opinion of him every half hour.'

He has just done me an essential service.—He learnt the other day from one of his sisters the secret reason why Lord Oldborough was displeased with Godfrey, and, I suspect, though this was not avowed, the true cause why Godfrey was despatched to the West Indies.— Lord Oldborough had been told either by Cunningham, or by one of the sisters, that Godfrey made love to Miss Hauton, and that when he came to town osten-

sibly on some regimental business, and was pleading for a brother-officer, his concealed motive was to break off the marriage of his Lordship's niece. Buckhurst had been at the opera in the same box with Miss Hauton and with my brother Godfrey one night in particular, when his conduct had been misrepresented, and as soon as he found that Lord Oldborough had been deceived, Buckhurst was determined that he should know the truth, or, at least, that he should know that my brother was not to blame. Godfrey never mentioned the subject to me. But, from what I can understand, the lady showed him *distinguished attention*. How Buckhurst Falconer managed to *right* my brother in Lord Oldborough's opinion without *involving* the young lady, I do not know. —He said that he had fortunately had an opportunity one evening at his father's, when he was playing at chess with Lord Oldborough, of speaking to him on that subject, when none of his

family was watching him. He told me that Lord Oldborough desires to see me, and has appointed his hour to morrow morning.—Now, Rosamond, my dear, set your imagination to work; I must go and draw a *replication*, which will keep mine fast bound.

Yours truly,

ALFRED PERCY."

At the appointed hour, Alfred waited upon the minister, and was received graciously.—Not one word of Godfrey, however, or of any thing leading to that subject. Lord Oldborough spoke to Alfred as to the son of his old friend.—He began by lamenting "the misfortunes, which had deprived Mr. Percy of that estate and station, to which he had done honor." His Lordship went on to say, that "he was sorry that Mr. Percy's love of retirement, or pride of independence, precluded all idea of seeing him in parliament; but he hoped that Mr. Percy's sons were in this extravagant

notion of independence, and in this *only*, unlike their father."

With all due deference, Alfred took the liberty of replying to the word *extravagant*, and endeavored to explain, that his father's ideas of independence did not go beyond just bounds: Lord Oldborough, contrary to his usual custom, when he met with any thing like contradiction, did not look displeased, on the contrary, he complimented Alfred on his being a good advocate.—Alfred was going to *fall into a commonplace*, about a good cause.—But from that he was happily saved by Lord Oldborough's changing the conversation.

He took up a pamphlet, which lay upon his table. It was Cunningham Falconer's, that is to say, the pamphlet which was published in Cunningham's name, and for which he was mean enough to take the credit from the poor starving genius in the garret. Lord Oldborough turned over the leaves—"Here is a passage, that was quoted yes-

terday at dinner, at Commissioner Falconer's, but I don't think that any of the company, or the Commissioner himself, though he is, or was, a reading man, could recollect to what author it alludes."

Lord Oldborough pointed to the passage :

" Thus the fane of heroes is at last neglected by their worshippers, and left to the care of the birds of Heaven, or abandoned to the serpents of the earth."

Alfred fortunately recollected, that this alluded to a description in Arrian of the Island of Achilles, the present Isle of serpents, where there is that temple of the hero, of which, as the historian says, " the care is left to the birds alone, who, every morning, repair to the sea, wet their wings, and sprinkle the temple, afterwards sweeping with their plumage it's sacred pavement."

Lord Oldborough smiled, and said, " The author . . . the reputed author of this pamphlet, Sir, is obliged to you for

throwing light upon a passage, which he could not himself elucidate."

This speech of Lord Oldborough's alluded to something that had passed at a dinner at Lord Skreene's, the day before Cunningham had set out on his embassy. Cunningham had been *posed* by this passage, for which Secretary Cope, who hated him, had maliciously complimented him, and besought him to explain it.—Secretary Cope, who was a poet, made an epigram on Cunningham, the diplomatist. The lines we do not remember. The points of it were, that Cunningham was so complete a diplomatist, that he would not commit himself by giving up his authority, even for a quotation, and that when he knew the author of an excellent thing, he, with admirable good faith, *kept it to himself*. This epigram remained at the time a profound secret to Lord Oldborough. Whilst Cunningham was going with a prosperous gale, it was not heard of; but it worked round according to the manœuvres of courts,

just by the time the tide of favor ebbed. Lord Oldborough, dissatisfied with one of Cunningham's despatches, was heard to say, as he folded it up—" *A slovenly performance!*"

Then, at the happy moment stepped in the rival Secretary Cope, and put into his Lordship's hands the epigram and the anecdote.—

All this the reader is to take as a note explanatory upon Lord Oldborough's last speech to Alfred, and now to go on with the conversation—at the word *elucidate*.

"I suspect,"—continued his Lordship, "that Mr. Alfred Percy knows more of this pamphlet altogether, than the reputed author ever did."

Alfred felt himself change color, and the genius in the garret rushed upon his mind; at the same instant he recollected, that he was not at liberty to name Mr. Temple, and that he must not betray Cunningham.—Alfred answered, "that

it was not surprising he should know the pamphlet well, as he probably admired it more, and had read it oftener, than the author himself had ever done."

"Very well parried, young gentleman.—You will not allow, then, that you had any hand in writing it."

"No, my Lord," said Alfred, "I had none whatever; I never saw it till it was published."

"I have not a right, in politeness, to press the question.—Permit me, however, to say, that it is a performance of which any man might be proud."

"I should, my Lord, be proud . . . very proud, if I had written it; but I am incapable of assuming a merit that is not mine, and I trust the manner in which I now disclaim it does not appear like the affected modesty of an author, who wishes to have that believed which he denies. I hope I convince your Lordship of the truth."

"I cannot have any doubt of what

you assert in this serious manner, Sir. May I ask if you can tell me the name of the real author?"

"Excuse me, my Lord—I cannot. I have answered your Lordship with perfect openness, as far as I am concerned."

"Sir," said Lord Oldborough, "I confess that I began this conversation with the prepossession, that you were equal to a performance, of which I think highly, but you have succeeded in convincing me that I was mistaken—that you are not equal—but superior to it."

Upon this compliment, Alfred, as he thought the force of politeness could no farther go, rose, bowed, and prepared to retire.

"Are you in a hurry to leave me, Mr. Percy?"

"Quite the contrary, but I was afraid of encroaching upon your Lordship's goodness; I know that your time is most valuable, and that your Lordship has so much business of importance."—

“Perhaps Mr. Alfred Percy may assist me in saving time hereafter.”——

Alfred sat down again, as his Lordship’s eye desired it.—Lord Oldborough remained for a few moments silent, leaning upon his arm on the table, deep in thought.

“Yes, Sir,” said he; “I certainly have, as you say, much business upon my hands.—But *that* is not the difficulty.—With hands and heads business is easily arranged and expedited.—I have hands and heads enough at my command.—Talents of all sorts can be obtained for their price, but, that which is above all price, integrity cannot.—There’s the difficulty.—There is my difficulty. I have not a single man about me, whom I can trust—many who understand my views, but none who feel them—‘*Des ames de boue et de fange*!’—Wretches who care not if the throne and the country perish, if their little interests Young gentleman,” said he, recollecting himself, and turning to

Alfred—"I feel as if I was speaking to a part of your father, when I am speaking to you."

Alfred felt this compliment, and Lord Oldborough saw that he felt it strongly.

"*Then, my dear Sir,*" said he,—"you understand me—I see we understand, and shall suit one another. I am in want of a secretary, to supply the place of Mr. Cunningham Falconer.—Mr. Drakelow is going to Constantinople.—But he shall first initiate his successor in the business of his office—a routine which little minds would make great minds believe is a mystery above ordinary comprehension.—But, Sir, I have no doubt, that you will be expert in a very short time in the technical part,—in the routine of office.—And, if it suits your views, in one word, I should be happy to have you for my private secretary.—Take time to consider, if you do not wish to give an answer immediately; but I beg that you will consult no one but yourself—not even your father.—And as

soon as your mind is made up, let me know your decision."

After returning thanks to the minister, who had, by this time, risen to a prodigious height in Alfred's opinion, after having reiterated his thanks with a warmth which was not displeasing, he retired.—The account of his feelings on this occasion are given with much *truth* in his own letter, from which we extract the passage:

"I believe I felt a little like Gil Blas after his first visit at court. Vapors of ambition certainly mounted into my head, and made me a little giddy; that night I did not sleep quite so well as usual. The Bar and the Court, Lord Oldborough and my special pleader, were continually before my eyes balancing in my imagination all the *proes* and *cons*.—I fatigued myself, but could neither rest nor decide—seven years of famine at the bar—horrible!—but then independence and liberty of conscience—and in time, success—the certain reward of in-

dustury—well-earned wealth—perhaps—honors—why not the highest professional honors.—The life of a party-man and a politician agreed by all who have tried—even by this very Lord Oldborough himself, agreed to be an unhappy life—obliged to live with people I despise—might be tempted, like others, to do things for which I should despise myself—subject to caprice—at best, my fortune quite dependant on my patron's continuance in power—power and favor uncertain.

“ It was long before I got my proes and cons even into this rude preparation for comparison, and longer still before the logical process of giving to each good and evil it's just value, and drawing clear deductions from distinct premises, could be accomplished. However, in four and twenty hours I solved the problem.

“ I waited upon Lord Oldborough to tell him my conclusion. With professions of gratitude, respect, and attach-

ment more sincere, I fancy, than those he usually hears, I began; and ended by telling him in the best manner I could, that I thought my trade was more honest than his, and that, hard as a lawyer's life was, I preferred it to a politician's.—You don't suspect me of saying all this—No, I was not quite so brutal—but, perhaps, it was implied by my declining the honor of the secretaryship, and preferring to abide by my profession.—Lord Oldborough looked . . . or my vanity fancied that he looked disappointed.—After a pause of silent displeasure, he said,

“ Well, Sir, upon the whole I believe you have decided wisely. I am sorry that you cannot serve me, and that I cannot serve you in the manner which I had proposed. Yours is a profession in which ministerial support can be of little use, but in which, talents, perseverance, and integrity, are secure, sooner or later, of success.—I have, therefore, only to wish you opportunity.—And, if any means

in my power should occur of accelerating that opportunity, you may depend upon it, Sir,' said his Lordship, holding out his hand to me, 'I shall not forget you—even if you were not the son of my old friend, you have made an interest for yourself in my mind.'

"Thus satisfactorily we parted—No—Just as I reached the door, his Lordship added—

"Your brother Captain Percy Have you heard from him lately?"

"Yes, my Lord, from Plymouth, where they were driven back by contrary winds.'

"Ha!—he was well I hope?"

"Very well, I thank your Lordship.'

"That's well—He is a temperate man, I think.—So he will stand the climate of the West Indies—and, probably, it will not be necessary for his Majesty's service, that he should remain there long.'

"I bowed——was again retiring, and was again recalled,

“There was a Major in your brother’s regiment, about whom Captain Percy spoke to me Major’

“Gascoigne, I believe, my Lord.’

“Gascoigne—true—Gascoigne.’——
His Lordship wrote the name down in a note-book.

—“Bows for the last time,—not a word more on either side.——

“And now that I have written all this to you, my dear mother, I am almost ashamed to send it—because it is so full of egotism. But Rosamond, the *excuser general*, will apologize for me, by pleading that I was obliged to tell the truth, and the whole truth.—My father too, I know, can tolerate better honest vanity than “pride that apes humility.” Whatever you may think of the manner, you will, I hope, approve the matter.—I think I am safe, at least, in my father’s approbation, having kept clear of patronage, and having asked no favor but a government frank to convey this packet to you.—If you have any letters for

Godfrey, send them to me before the first Wednesday in the month, when the West-India packet sails. I have executed all your commissions—don't be afraid of troubling me with more.—Alas! I am not yet so busy as to find commissions troublesome.

“Erasmus says he has written my mother two folio sheets, and that I need say nothing about him.—

“I am glad to hear you are all going to Hungerford-Castle.—Whilst they were in town, Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer were very kind to Erasmus and to me; more so, since we lost our fortune, I think, than before.—Love to Caroline, and thanks for her letter.—Love to Rosamond, upon condition, that she will write to me from Hungerford-Castle, and cheer my solitude in London with news from the country, and from home.—

Your affectionate son,

ALFRED PERCY.

“P. S. I hope you all like O'Brien.”

O'Brien, we hope the reader recollects, was the poor Irishman, whose leg the surgeon had condemned to be cut off, but which was saved by Erasmus.—A considerable time afterwards, one morning, when Erasmus was just getting up, he heard a loud knock at his door, and in one and the same instant pushing past his servant into his bed-chamber, and to the foot of his bed, rushed O'Brien, breathless, and with a face perspiring joy—

“I axe your Honor's pardon, master, but it's what you're wanting down street in all haste—Here's an elegant case for ye, Doctor dear!—That painter-jantleman down in the square there beyond that is not expected.”—

“Not expected!”—said Erasmus.

“Ay, not expected, so put on ye with the speed of light—Where's his waistcoat?” continued he, turning to Dr. Percy's astonished servant—“and coat?—the top coat—and the wig—has

he one?—Well! boots or shoes give him any way.”——

“ But I don’t clearly understand Pray did this gentleman send for me?”—said Dr. Percy.

“ Send for your Honor! Troth, he never thought of it—No nor couldn’t—how could he? and he in the way he was and is—But God bless ye! and never mind shaving, or another might get it afore we’d be back. Though there was none *in it* but myself when I left it—but still keep on buttoning for the life.”——

Erasmus dressed as quickly as he could, not understanding, however, above one word in ten that had been said to him. His servant, who did not comprehend even one word, endeavored in vain to obtain an explanation; but O’Brien, paying no regard to his solemn face of curiosity, put him aside with his hand, and continuing to address Dr. Percy, followed him about the room.

“ Master! you mind my *mintioning* to you last time I *seen* your Honor, that my

leg was weak *by times*, no fault though to the doctor that cured it, so I could not be *after carrying* the weighty loads I used up and down the ladders at every call, so I quit *sarving* the masons, and sought for lighter work, and found an employ that *shuted* me with a jantleman painter, grinding of his colours, and that was what I was at this morning, so I was, and standing as close to him as I am this minute to your Honor, thinking of nothing at all just now, please your Honor, *forenent* him—*asy* grinding, *whin* he took some sort or kind of a fit.”

“A fit! Why did you not tell me that sooner?”

“Sure I *tould* you he was not *expicted*,—that is, if you don’t know in England, *not expicted to live*—and—sure I *tould* your Honor so from the first,” said O’Brien. “But then the jantleman was as well as I am this minute, that minute afore—and the *nixt* fell his length on the floor entirely. Well! I set him up again, and for want of better

filled out a thimble-full say, of the spirits of wine as they call it, which he got by good luck for the varnish, and made him take it down, and he come to, and I axed him how was he after it?—Better, says he—That's well, says I, and who will I send for to ye, Sir? says I—But afore he could make answer, I bethought me of your own Honor, and for fear he would say another, I never troubled him, putting the question to him again, but just set the spirits nigh-hand him, and away with me here; I come off without *letting on* a word to nobody, good or bad, in dread your Honor would miss the job."

"Job!"—said Dr. Percy's servant—
"do you think my master wants a job?"

"Oh! Lord, love ye, and just give his hat. Would you have us be standing on ceremony now in a case of life and death?"—

Dr. Percy was, as far as he understood it, of the Irishman's way of thinking. He followed as fast as he could to the painter's—found that he had had a slight paraly-

tic stroke ;—from which he recovered.—We need not detail the particulars.—Nature and Dr. Percy *brought him through*.—He was satisfied with his physician ; for Erasmus would not take any fee, because he went unsent for by the patient. The painter, after his recovery, was one day complimenting Dr. Percy on the inestimable service he had done the arts in restoring him to his pencil, in proof of which the artist showed many masterpieces, that wanted only the finishing touch, in particular a huge long-limbed, fantastic, allegorical piece of his own design, which he assured Dr. Percy was the finest example of the *beau idéal* ancient or modern, that human genius had ever produced upon canvass.—“And what do you think, doctor,” said the painter, “tell me what you can think of a connoisseur, a patron, Sir, who could stop my hand, and force me from that immortal work to a portrait, a portrait !—Barbarian ! he fit to encourage genius !—he set up to be a Mecænas !

mere vanity !—gives pensions to four sign-post daubers, not fit to grind my colors ! knows no more of the art than that fellow,” pointing to the Irishman, who was at that instant grinding the colors—*asy* as he described himself.

“ And lets me languish here in obscurity !” continued the enraged painter—“ Now I’ll never put another stroke to his Dutch beauty’s portrait if I starve—if I rot for it in a jail—he a Mæcenas !”

The changes upon this abuse were rung repeatedly by this irritated genius, his voice and palsied hand trembling with rage while he spoke, till he was interrupted by a carriage stopping at the door.—

“ Here’s the patron !”—cried the Irishman, with an arch look—“ Ay, it’s the patron sure enough !”

Dr. Percy was going away, but O’Brien got between him and the door, menacing his coat with his pallet-knife covered with oil—Erasmus stopped.

“ I axe your pardon, but don’t go,”

whispered he, “ I wouldn’t for the best coat nor waistcoat ever I seen you went this minute, Dear !”—

Mr. Gresham was announced—a gentleman of a most respectable, benevolent, prepossessing appearance, whom Erasmus had some recollection of having seen before. Mr. Gresham recognised him instantly.—Mr. Gresham was the merchant, whom Erasmus had met at Sir Amyas Courtney’s the morning when he went to solicit Sir Amyas’s vote at the hospital election.—After having spoken a few words to the painter about the portrait, Mr. Gresham turned to Dr. Percy, and said, “ I am afraid, Sir, that you lost your election at the hospital by your sincerity about a shell.”—

Before Erasmus could answer—in less time than he could have thought it possible to take off a stocking, a great bare leg—O’Brien’s leg, came between Mr. Gresham and Dr. Percy.

“ There’s what lost him the election !

saving that leg lost him the election—so it did, God for ever bless him! and reward him for it!”

Then with eloquence, emphasis, and action, which came from the heart, and went to the heart, the poor fellow told how his leg had been saved, and spoke of what Dr. Percy had done for him, in terms which Erasmus would have been ashamed to hear, but that he really was so much affected with O'Brien's gratitude, and thought it did so much honor to human nature, that he could not stop him.—Mr. Gresham was touched also; and upon observing this, Erasmus's friend, with his odd mixture of comedy and pathos, ended with this exhortation.

“And God bless you, Sir, you're a great man, and have many to my knowledge under a compliment to you, and if you've any friends that are *lying*, or sick, if you'd recommend them to send for *him* in preference to any other of the doctors, it would be a charity to themselves and to me—for I will never have peace else

thinking how I have been a hinderance to him—And a charity it would be to themselves, for what does the sick want but to be cured? and there's the man will do that for them, as two witnesses here present can prove,—that jantleman if he would spake, and myself.”

Erasmus now peremptorily stopped this scene, for he began to feel for himself, and to be ashamed of the ridicule, which his puffing friend, in his zeal, was throwing upon him; Erasmus was afraid that Mr. Gresham might think him mean. So strongly was our young physician occupied by these ideas, that he did not hear one word of what the painter said. Mr. Gresham, however, at once relieved his wounded pride, and dispelled all fears and anxiety, by the manner in which he spoke and looked. He concluded by inviting Dr. Percy to his house, expressing with much cordiality a wish “to be more intimately acquainted with a young gentleman, of whose character he had twice accidentally learned more good than his

modesty seemed willing to allow should be known."

O'Brien's eyes sparkled; he rubbed his hands, but restrained himself lest Dr. Percy should be displeased.—When Erasmus went away, O'Brien followed him down stairs, "begging his Honor's pardon—if he had said any thing wrong or unbecoming, it was through ignorance."

It was impossible to be angry with him.—

We extract from Erasmus's letter to his mother, the following account of his first visit to Mr. Gresham.

"When I went to see Mr. Gresham, I was directed to an unfashionable part of the town, to one of the dark old streets of the city, and from all appearance I thought I was going to grope my way into some strange dismal den, like many of the ancient houses in that quarter of the town.—But to my surprise, after passing through a court, and up an unpromising staircase, I found myself in a spacious apartment.—The darkness changed

to light, the smoke and din of the city, to retirement and fresh air—A near view of the Thames appeared through large windows down to the floor, balconies filled with flowers and sweet shrubs!—It was an Arabian scene in London—Rosamond! how you would have been delighted! But I have not yet told you, that there was a young and beautiful lady sitting near the balcony, and her name is Constance.—That is all I shall tell you about the young lady at present.—I must go on with Mr. Gresham, who was in his picture gallery—Yes, picture gallery—and a very fine one it is—Mr. Gresham, whose fortune is one of those of which only English merchants can form any adequate idea, makes use of it in a manner, which does honor to his profession and to his country. He has patronised the arts with a munificence not unworthy of the Medici.

“ My complaining genius, the painter who had abused his patron so much, was there with his portrait, which, notwith-

standing his vow never to touch it again, he had finished, and brought home, and with it the sprawling Venus: he was now extremely angry with Mr. Gresham for declining to purchase this chef d'œuvre.—With the painter was a poet equally vain and dissatisfied.

“ I admired the mildness, with which Mr. Gresham bore with their ill-humor and vanity.—After the painter and poet to my satisfaction had departed, I said something expressive of my pity for patrons, who had to deal with the irritable race. He mildly replied, that he thought that a man, surrounded as he was with all the comforts and luxuries of life, should have compassion, and should make allowance for genius struggling with poverty, disease, and disappointment.—He acknowledged, that he had met with much ingratitude, and had been plagued by the pretensions, expectations, and quarrels of his tribe of poets and painters.—‘ For a man’s own happiness,’ said he, ‘ the

trade of a patron is the most dreadful trade he can follow—gathering samphire were nothing to it.’

“ Pray tell my father this, because it opens a new view, and new confirmation of his opinions—I never spent a more agreeable day than this with Mr. Gresham. He converses well, and has a variety of information which he pours forth liberally, and yet without the slightest ostentation; his only wish seems to be to entertain and inform those to whom he speaks; he has no desire to shine.—In a few hours we went over a world of literature.—I was proud to follow him, and he seemed pleased that I could sometimes anticipate—I happened to know as well as he did the history of the two Flamels, and several particulars of the jesuits in Paraguay.

“ My father often told us, when we were boys, that there is no knowledge, however distant it seems from our profession, that may not, sometime or other, be useful; and Mr. Gresham, after he

had conversed sufficiently with me both on literature and science, to discover that I was not an ignorant pretender, grew warm in his desire to serve me. But he had the politeness to refrain from saying any thing directly about medicine; he expressed only an increased desire to cultivate my acquaintance, and begged that I would call upon him at any hour, and *give him the pleasure of my conversation, whenever I had time.*

“The next morning he called upon me and told me, that he was desired to ask my advice for a sick partner of his, to whom, if I would accompany him, he would immediately introduce me.—Who and what this partner is, and of what disease he is dying, if you have any curiosity to know, you shall hear in my next, this frank will hold no more—accept love—light as air—to all at home. When shall I ever see home again?

“Dear Mother, affectionately yours,
E. PERCY.”

CHAPTER XVI.

Now for the visit to Hungerford-Castle—a fine old place in a beautiful park, which excelled many parks of greater extent by the uncommon size of its venerable oaks. In the castle, which was sufficiently spacious to accommodate with ease and perfect comfort the *troops of friends*, which its owner's beneficent character drew round her, there were apartments that usually bore the name of some of those persons, who were considered as the most intimate friends of the family.—The Percies were of this number.—They found their own rooms ready, the old servants of the house rejoicing to see them again, and eager in offering their services. Many things showed that they had been thought of, and expected; yet there was nothing

that could remind them, that any change had taken place in their fortune; no formal, or peculiar civilities from the mistress of the house, from her daughter, or nieces,—neither more, nor less attention than usual; but by every thing that marked old habits of intimacy and confidence, the Percies were, as if undesignedly and necessarily, distinguished from other guests.—

Of these the most conspicuous was the Lady Angelica Headingham.—Her Ladyship had lately come to a large estate, and had consequently produced a great sensation in the fashionable world. During the early part of her life she had been much and injudiciously restrained. The moment the pressure was taken off, the spirit boiled with surprising rapidity.—Immediately Lady Angelica Headingham shone forth a beauty, a bel-esprit, and a patroness, and though she appeared as it were *impromptu* in these characters, yet to do her justice, she supported them with as much spirit,

truth, and confidence, as if she had been in the habit of playing them all her life, and as if she had trod the fashionable stage from her teens. There was only one point in which, perhaps, she erred. From not having been early accustomed to flattery, she did not receive it with quite sufficient *nonchalance*. The adoration paid to her in her triple capacity by crowds of worshippers only increased the avidity of her taste for incense, to receive which, she would now and then stoop lower, than became a goddess.—She had not yet been suspected of a real partiality for any of her admirers, though she was accused of giving each just as much encouragement as was necessary to turn his head.—Of these admirers, two, the most eager and earnest in the pursuit, had followed her Ladyship to the country, and were now at Hungerford-Castle. Sir James Harcourt, and Mr. Barclay.

Sir James Harcourt was remarkably handsome and fashionable—completely

a man of the world, and a courtier; who, after having ruined his fortune by standing for Government two contested county elections, had dangled year after year at court, living upon the hope and promise of a pension, or a place, till his creditors warning him, that they could wait no longer, he had fallen in love with Lady Angelica Headingham.—Her Ladyship's other admirer, Mr. Barclay, was a man of considerable fortune, of good family, and of excellent sense and character. He had arrived at that time of life, when he wished to settle to the quiet enjoyment of domestic happiness. But he had seen so much misery arise from unfortunate marriages, among some of his particular friends, that he had been afraid of forming any attachment, or at least, engagement. His acquaintance with fashionable life had still further rendered him averse from matrimony; and from love he had defended himself with infinite caution, and escaped, till in an unlucky moment he had met with Lady

Angelica. Against his better judgment, he had been captivated by her charms and talents: his reason, however, still struggled with his passion, he had never actually declared his love; but the lady knew it probably better than he did, and her caprice and coquetry cost him many an agonizing hour.—All which he bore with the silence and patience of a martyr.—

When the Percy family saw Lady Angelica for the first time, she was in all her glory,—fresh from a successful toilette, conscious of renovated powers, with an accumulated spirit of animation, and inspired by the ambition to charm a new audience. Though past the bloom of youth, she was a handsome showy woman, with the air of one who requires and receives admiration. Her attitudes, her action, and the varied expression she threw into her countenance, were more than the occasion required, and rather too evidently designed to interest or to fascinate. She was surrounded by a

group of gentlemen, Sir James Harcourt, Mr. Barclay, Mr. Seebright, a young poet; Mr. Grey, a man of science; and others—*personnages muets*.—Arduous as was the task, Lady Angelica's various powers, and indefatigable exertion proved capable of keeping each of these different minds in full play, and in high admiration, even at the most difficult and dangerous of all times, the critical half hour before dinner.

Beauties are always curious about beauties, and wits about wits.—Lady Angelica had heard, that one of the Miss Percies was uncommonly handsome. Quick as eye could glance, her Ladyship's passed by Mrs. Percy and Rosamond as they entered the room, fixed upon Caroline, and was satisfied.—There was beauty enough to alarm, but simplicity sufficient to remove all fears of rivalry.—Caroline entered, without any prepared grace or practised smile, but merely as if she was coming into a room.—Her two friends, the Lady Pembrokes,

instantly placed her between them, her countenance expressing just what she felt, affectionate pleasure at seeing them.

“A sweet pretty creature, really!”—whispered Lady Angelica, to her admirer in waiting, Sir James Harcourt.—

“Ye ye yes—but nothing *marquante*,” replied Sir James.—

Mr. Barclay’s eye followed, and fixed upon Caroline with a degree of interest.—The room was so large, and they were at such a distance from Caroline, who was now occupied in listening to her friends, that Lady Angelica could continue her observations without fear of being overheard.

“There is something so interesting in that air of simplicity!” pursued her Ladyship, addressing herself to Mr. Barclay—“Don’t you think there is a wonderful charm in simplicity?—’tis a pity it can’t last—it is like those delicate colors, which always catch the taste the moment they are seen, by which I’ve been taken in a hundred times, and have

now forsworn for ever—treacherous colors that fade, and fly even while you look at them.”

“That is a pity,” said Mr. Barclay, withdrawing his eyes from Miss Caroline Percy.

“A thousand pities,” said Lady Angelica. “Perhaps, in the country, this delicate charm might possibly, and with infinite care and caution, last a few years, but in town it would not last a season.”

“True—too true,”—said Mr. Barclay.—

“For which reason,” pursued Lady Angelica, “give me something a little more durable, something that can stand what it must meet with in the world. Fashion for instance, though not half so charming till we are used to it or knowledge, though often dear-bought; or genius, though doubly taxed with censure; or wit, though so hard to be had genuine any thing is better

than a faded charm, a has-been-pretty simplicity."

"When it comes to *that*, it is lamentable indeed," said Mr. Barclay.—He seemed to wish to say something more in favor of simplicity, but to be overpowered by wit.—

Sir James shrugged his shoulders, and protested that "simplicity had something too *fade* in it, to suit his taste."—

All this time, where was Colonel Hungerford?—He had been expected to arrive this day—but a letter came to tell his mother, that he was detained by indispensable military business, and that, he feared, he could not for some weeks have the pleasure of being at home.—Every one looked and felt disappointed.—

"So," thought Rosamond, "we shall be gone before he comes, and he will not see Caroline!"—

"So!"—said Lady Angelica, to herself—"He will not see me."—

Rosamond was somewhat comforted for her disappointment, by observing, that Caroline was not quite lost upon Mr. Barclay, preoccupied though he was with his brilliant mistress.—

She thought he seemed to notice the marked difference there was in their manner of passing the day.—

Lady Angelica, though she would sometimes handle a pencil, touch the harp, or take up a book, yet never was really employed.—

Caroline was continually occupied.

In the morning, Caroline usually sat with Rosamond and the two Lady Pembrokes, in a little room called *the Oriel*, which opened into the great library. Here in happy retirement Caroline and Rosamond looked over Mrs. Hungerford's select library, and delighted to read the passages, which Mrs. Hungerford had marked with approbation. At other times, without disturbing the rest of the company, or being disturbed by them, Caroline enjoyed the opportunity of cul-

tivating her talents for music and painting, with the assistance of her two friends, who eminently excelled in these accomplishments.

All this time Lady Angelica spent in talking to show her wit, or lounging to show her grace. Now and then her Ladyship condescended to join the young people, when they went out to walk, but never, unless they were attended by gentlemen.—The beauties of nature have come into fashion of late, and Lady Angelica Headingham could talk of bold outlines, and sublime mountains, the charming effects of light and shade, fine *accidents*, and rich foliage—spring verdure and autumnal tints,—whilst Caroline could enjoy all these things, without expecting to be admired for admiring them. Mrs. Mortimer was planting a new shrubbery, and laying out a ride through the park. Caroline took an unaffected interest in all her plans;—whilst Lady Angelica was interested only in showing how much she remem-

bered of Price, and Repton, and Knight. She became too hot or too cold, or she was tired to death the moment she ceased to be the principal object of attention.—But, though her Ladyship was thus idle by day, she sometimes worked hard by night hard as Butler is said to have toiled in secret, to support the character of an idle universal genius, who knows every thing without studying any thing.—From dictionaries and extracts, abridgments and *beauties* of various authors,—here, and there, and every where, she picked up shining scraps, and often by an ostentation of superficial knowledge succeeded in appearing in conversation to possess a vast extent of literature, and to be deeply skilled in matters of science, of which she knew nothing, and for which she had no taste.

Mr. Seebright, the poet, was easily duped by this display; he expressed the most flattering astonishment, and pronounced her Ladyship to be a universal

genius. He looked up to Lady Angelica for patronage. He was so weak, or so ignorant of the world, as to imagine, that the patronage of a fashionable literary lady of high rank would immediately guide the opinion of the public, and bring a poet forward to fortune and fame.—With these hopes he performed his daily, hourly duty of admiration to his fair patroness, with all possible zeal and assiduity—but it was observed by Rosamond that, in conversation, whenever Mr. Seebright had a new idea or a favorite allusion to produce, his eye involuntarily turned, first to Caroline; and though he professed, on all points of taste and criticism, to be implicitly governed by Lady Angelica Headingham, there was “a small still voice, to which he more anxiously listened.”

As to Mr. Grey, the man of science—he soon detected Lady Angelica’s ignorance; smiled in silence at her blunders, and despised her for her *arts of pretence*. In vain, to win his suffrage,

she produced the letters of various men of note and talents, with whom she was in correspondence ; in vain she talked of all the persons of rank, who were her relations or dear friends.

“ She should be so happy to introduce him to this great man, or to mention him to that great lady—She should be so proud, on her return to town, to have Mr. Grey at her *esprit parties*—She would have such and such celebrated characters to meet him, and would have the pleasure-and honor of introducing him to every person worth knowing in town.”

With all due civility Mr. Grey declined these offers. There were few persons, the pleasure or honor of whose company could compensate to him for the loss of his time, or equal the enjoyment he had in his own occupations ; and those few he was so happy to have for his friends—he did not wish to form new acquaintance—he never went to *conversaziones*—he was much obliged to

her Ladyship, but he did not want to be introduced or mentioned to great men or great women. The nature of his fame was quite independent of fashion.—In this respect men of science have much the advantage of men of taste. Works of taste may, to a certain degree, be *cried up* or *cried down* by fashion. The full-fledged bard soars superior, and looks down at once upon the great and little world: but the young poet, in his first attempts to rise, is often obliged, or thinks himself obliged, to have his wing imp'd by patronage.

With all her resources, however, both of patronage and of *bel-esprit*, Lady Angelica was equally surprised and mortified, to find herself foiled at her own arms by a girl whom nobody knew—She changed her manœuvres—she thought she could show Miss Caroline Percy, that, whatever might be her abilities, her knowledge, or her charms, these must all submit to a superior power—the power of fashion.—Caroline having

lived in the country, could not know much of the world of fashion.—This was a world from which she thought she could move every other at pleasure. Her conversation was no longer of books, of which all of equal talents were competent to form a judgment; but her *talk* was now of persons, with whom no one, who had not lived in the great world, could pretend to be acquainted, much less could presume to judge. Her Ladyship tried in vain to draw Mrs. Hungerford and Mrs. Mortimer to her aid; they were too well-bred, to encourage this exclusive and unprofitable conversation. But her Ladyship knew, that she could be sufficiently supported by Sir James Harcourt; he prided himself upon knowing and being known to *every body*, that is *anybody*, in London; he had an inexhaustible fund of town and court anecdote; was always *au courant du jour*. What an auxiliary for Lady Angelica! —But though their combined operations were carried on with consummate skill,

and though the league offensive was strictly kept with every demonstration of mutual amity that could excite jealousy, or express contempt for rival powers; yet the ultimate purpose was not gained—Caroline was not mortified, and Mr. Barclay was not jealous.—At least, if he was, he did not show it sufficiently to afford any triumph—He sometimes looked as if his heart would break, but never as if it would bend.—As to Caroline, in vain her Ladyship blazoned forth her fashionable titles to distinction; Caroline was not amazed at the Right Honorable array that was mustered before her. She was absolutely content, without being able to tell who were, or were not, to be married this year, or who had been, or who were to be divorced. She could even employ herself, or be amused with her own thoughts, just as well and as happily whilst all this fashionable *technical* tattle was going on, as if nothing was said, and as if nobody was present. This strange power

of abstraction, this stupid deficiency of curiosity, this bliss of ignorance, and quietude in silence, Lady Angelica could not comprehend; but she felt that it baffled all her "eloquence to vex," and rendered nugatory her whole system of exclusive conversation.—

One morning Lady Angelica and Sir James Harcourt were looking over some portraits of the beauties of King Charles the Second's time: Caroline was looking at them also, and for some time a conversation was carried on with the express intent of mortifying her. Every portrait, whose style of beauty at all resembled hers, Sir James and Lady Angelica depreciated, and affected to dislike or to despise: every face, which by any means could be likened to Lady Angelica, Sir James never failed to extol as *fascinating*. Caroline was so free from all ideas of rivalry, that she did not suspect them in others. She was surprised at the extraordinary judgments she heard pronounced, and honestly expressed her own

different taste and opinion—Mrs. Mortimer and Mr. Barclay both smiled at this ingenuous simplicity—at length a glance of Sir James Harcourt's, from one of the portraits to Lady Angelica's face, told the secret to Caroline, who, though quite unsuspecting, was not, as Sir James began to believe, dull of apprehension. It was hoped, that she would now, when she understood the meaning of what passed, feel some degree of vexation; but, on the contrary, she submitted with so good a grace, that it was evident she was not in the least mortified by having her own style of beauty undervalued by this acknowledged and fashionable connoisseur.—Mr. Barclay observed this, and Lady Angelica saw that he observed it.—Provoked by not being able to provoke Caroline, and exasperated by Mr. Barclay's look, her Ladyship continued in exclusive conversation with Sir James Harcourt, determined to excite Mr. Barclay's jealousy, and to bend or break his proud heart. Sir James admired her

in every Proteus form of affectation. Mr. Barclay, as she thought, evidently pained by her coquetry, retired from the sofa where she sat, and went to Mrs. Hungerford's table, where he took up a book and began to read.—Lady Angelica spared no art to distract his attention—She contrived for herself an employment, which called forth continual exclamations of admiration, joy, despair, which at first made Mr. Barclay turn to see by what they could be caused; but when he found, that they were occasioned only by the rise or fall of a house of cards which she was building, he internally said, “Pshaw!”—and, afterwards kept his eyes fixed upon his book.—Sir James continued to serve the fair architect with the frail materials for her building—her *Folly*, as she called it—and for his services he received much encouragement of smiles, and many marked commendations—Mrs. Hungerford called upon Mr. Barclay to read a favorite poem of hers.

Mr. Barclay read remarkably well, and soon fixed the attention of all the company, except that of Lady Angelica and her knight, Sir James Harcourt, whom she detained in her service. She could not be so flagrantly rude as to interrupt the reader by audible exclamations, but by dumb-show, by a variety of gestures and pretty looks of delight at every fresh story added to her card edifice, and at every motion of terror lest her tower should fall, her Ladyship showed Mr. Barclay, that she was not listening to that which she knew he was particularly desirous that she should hear.—The moment the reader's voice ceased, Lady Angelica approached the table.

“Ten millions of pardons!” said she, drawing some cards from beneath Miss Caroline Percy's elbow which rested on them.—“Unpardonable wretch that I am, to have disturbed such a reverie! and such an attitude!—Mr. Barclay,” continued her Ladyship, “now if you

have leisure to think of me, may I trouble you for some of your little cards for the attic of my dear Folly."

Mr. Barclay coolly presented the cards to her Ladyship. Then looked out of the window, observed that his horse was at the door, and was following Mr. Percy out of the room, when Lady Angelica, just as Mr. Barclay passed, blew down her tower, and exclaimed—

"There's an end of my Folly, of one of my follies I mean—I wish I could blow them all away as easily."

The sigh, and look of penitence, with which she pronounced these words, were accepted as explanation—Mr. Barclay stopped, and returned; while sweeping the wreck of her tower from the table, she repeated :

"Easy, as when ashore an infant stands,

"And draws imagin'd houses on the sands,

"The sportive wanton, pleas'd with some new play,

"Sweeps the slight works and fancied domes away :

"Thus vanish at thy touch the tow'rs and walls,

"The toil of *mornings* in a moment falls."

“Beautiful lines,” said Mr. Barclay.

“And charmingly repeated!” said Sir James Harcourt—“Are they your Ladyship’s own?”

“No; Homer’s,” said she, smiling—“Pope’s Homer’s, I mean.”

To cover his blunder as fast as possible, Sir James went on to something else, and asked, What her Ladyship thought of Flaxman’s Sketches from the Iliad and Odyssey—“He had seen the book lying on the library table yesterday—indeed, his eye had been caught, as it lay open, by a striking resemblance . . . he knew it was very rude to talk of likenesses . . . but, really, the resemblance was striking between a lady he had in his view, and one of the figures in Flaxman, of Venus, or Penelope, he could not say which, but he would look for the book and see in a moment.”

The book was not to be found on the library table—Mrs. Hungerford said, she believed it was in the Oriel—Sir

James went to look—Miss Caroline Percy was drawing from it—that was unlucky, for Mr. Barclay followed, stayed to admire Miss Percy's drawings, which he had never seen before—and in looking over these sketches of hers from Flaxman's Homer, and from Euripides and Æschylus, which the Lady Pembroke showed him, and in speaking of these, he discovered so much of Caroline's taste, literature, and feeling, that he could not quit the Oriel. Lady Angelica had followed to prevent mischief, and Mrs. Hungerford had followed to enjoy the pleasure of seeing Caroline's modest merit appreciated. Whilst Mr. Barclay admired in silence, Sir James Harcourt, not with his usual politeness, exclaimed :

“ I protest I had no notion, that Miss Caroline Percy drew in this style.”—

“ That's possible,” cried Lady Mary Pembroke, coloring, with that prompt indignation which she was prone to feel when any thing was said that seemed

derogatory to her friends—"That's possible, Sir James, and yet you find Miss Caroline Percy does draw in this very superior style——Yes: and it is the perfection of her accomplishments, that they are never exhibited."

"You have always the pleasure of discovering them," said Mrs. Hungerford, "they are as a woman's accomplishments and acquirements ought to be, more retiring than obtrusive; or as my old friend, Dr. South, quaintly, but aptly expresses it—more in intaglio than in cameo."

At this instant a sudden scream was heard from Lady Angelica Headingham, who caught hold of Mr. Barclay's arm, and writhed as if in agony.

"Good Heavens! What is the matter?"—cried Mr. Barclay.

"Oh, cramp! cramp! horrid cramp! in my foot—in my leg."

"Rest upon me," said Mr. Barclay—"and stretch your foot out."

"Torture!—I can't"——It was

impossible that she could stand, without the support of both gentlemen.

“ Carry me to the sofa—There ! ”—

When they had carried her out of the Oriel to the sofa in the library, and when her Ladyship found, that she had excited sufficient interest, and drawn the attention of Mr. Barclay away from Caroline ; her Ladyship began to grow a little better, and by graceful degrees recovered the use of her pretty limbs.—

And now, as she had reason to be satisfied with the degree of feeling, which Mr. Barclay had involuntarily shown for her when he thought she was ill, if her vanity had had any touch of gratitude or affection mixed with it, she would not have taken this moment to torment the heart of the man, . . . the only man who ever really loved her—But all in her was vanity—She began to coquet with Sir James Harcourt—she let him put on her sandal and tie it's strings—She sent him for her shawl, for she had

a mind to walk in the park—and when Mr. Barclay offered to attend her, and when she found that Caroline and the Lady Pembrokes were going, she had a mind not to go, and she resolved to detain them all in admiration of her. She took her shawl from Sir James, and throwing it round her in graceful drapery, she asked Sir James “if he had ever seen any of Lady Hamilton’s attitudes, or rather scenic representations with shawl drapery.”

“Yes, he had; but, he should be charmed to see them in perfection from her Ladyship.”—

Notwithstanding the hint Mrs. Hungerford had given about *exhibiting*, and notwithstanding Mr. Barclay’s grave looks, Lady Angelica, avowedly to please Sir James Harcourt, consented to give the exhibition of the passions.—She ran into the Oriel—attired herself in a most appropriate manner, and appeared first in the character of Fear—then of

Hope—She acted admirably, but just as

“Hope, enchanted, smil’d and wav’d her golden hair,”

her Ladyship’s auburn tresses caught on some ornament in the room. The whole fabric was raised a little from the fair head on which it seemed to grow—Caroline sprang forward instantly, and dexterously disentangling the accomplished actress, relieved her from this imminent and awkward peril.

“She is a sweet creature!”—cried Mrs. Hungerford—“I beg pardon for the exclamation—it was forced from my heart,”—continued she, addressing herself to Mrs. Percy—“A mother will forgive me.”

“Every body thinks what Mrs. Hungerford has expressed, I believe,” said Mr. Barclay.

“I am sure I’m exceedingly obliged to Miss Caroline Percy,” said her Lady-

ship, adjusting her head-dress. "There, now, all's right again—Thank you, Miss Percy—Don't trouble yourself, pray"—

The heartless manner of these thanks, and her Ladyship's preparing to go on again with her exhibition, so displeased and disgusted Mr. Barclay, that he left her to the flattery of Sir James Harcourt, and, sighing deeply, quitted the room.—

Lady Angelica, proud of showing her power of tormenting a man of his sense, smiled victorious, and, in a half whisper, said to Mrs. Hungerford—

"Exit Mr. Barclay, jealous, because he thinks I did the shawl-attitudes for Sir James, and not for him—Poor man, he's very angry.—But he'll ride it off !. . . or, I'll smile it off."—

Mrs. Hungerford shook her head.—When her Ladyship's exhibition had finished, and when Sir James had continued, repeating, either with his words or his looks—"Charming!—Is not she charming!"—till the time of dress-

ing; an hour to which he was always punctual; he retired to his toilette, and Lady Angelica found herself alone with Mrs. Hungerford.

“ Oh! how tired I am!” cried her Ladyship, throwing herself on a sofa beside her. My spirits do so wear me out—I am sure I’m too much for you, Mrs. Hungerford; I am afraid you think me a strange wild creature—But, dear Madam, why do you look so grave?”

“ My dear Lady Angelica Headingham,” said Mrs. Hungerford, in a serious but affectionate tone, laying her hand upon Lady Angelica’s as she spoke, “ I was, you know, your mother’s most intimate friend—I wish to be your friend—Considering this and my age, I think I may venture to speak to you with more freedom than any one else now living could with propriety—It grieves me to see such a woman as you are, spoiling by adulation.”

“ Thank you, my dear Mrs. Hungerford, and now do tell me all my

faults," said Lady Angelica—"Only first let me just say, that if you are going to tell me that I am a coquet, and a fool, I know I am—both—and I can't help it—And I know I am what some people call *odd*—But I would not for the world be a common character."—

"Then you must not be a coquet," said Mrs. Hungerford, "for that is a common character—the hacknied character of every play, of every novel. And whatever is common is vulgar, you know—airs and affectation are common and paltry—throw them aside, my dear Lady Angelica—disdain flattery—prove that you value your own esteem above vulgar admiration, and then, with such beauty and talents as you possess, you may be, what you admire, an uncommon character."

"*May be!*" repeated Lady Angelica, in a voice of vexation—"Well I know I have a hundred faults, but I never before heard any body, friend or enemy, deny that I *am* an uncommon character—

Now, Mrs. Hungerford, do you know any one of a more uncommon character?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Hungerford, smiling—"I know the thing that's most uncommon,"

"I know a reasonable woman,

"Handsome and witty, yet a friend."

"Oh! your friend, Miss Caroline Percy, I suppose—Well! though she is so great a favorite of yours, I must say, that, to my fancy, she is as little of an uncommon character as any girl I ever saw—uncommon beauty, I acknowledge, she has, though not the style of face I like."

"And an uncommonly good understanding."

"May be so, I don't dispute it, and uncommon *learning* for any thing I know to the contrary—but all this is not what I call *character*."

"Nor I," said Mrs. Hungerford.

“ Then, what makes her an uncommon character ?”

“ Her having this knowledge, understanding, and beauty, without one grain of vanity, affectation, or envy.”

“ Stay till you see her tried,” said Lady Angelica ; stay till she has gone through one winter’s campaign in London—Stay, till she has as many admirers as”

“ As you have,” said Mrs. Hungerford, smiling—“ she seems to be in a fair way of soon trying that experiment to your satisfaction.”

—————A considerable pause ensued ; during which many conflicting passions appeared in Lady Angelica’s countenance.—————

“ After all—Mrs. Hungerford,” resumed she, “ do you think Mr. Barclay is really attached to me ?”

“ I think he *was* really attached to you, and strongly—But you have been doing all you can . . . forgive me, I

would not speak so harshly, but to secure your future happiness . . . you have been doing all you can, to weaken and destroy his attachment—I fear”

“Fear nothing !”——“I fear nothing,” exclaimed Lady Angelica, “now you tell me—Dear Mrs. Hungerford!—that you do not doubt the *reality* of his love—All the rest I will answer for—Trust to me, I know my game.”

Mrs. Hungerford sighed—and replied —“I am old, have stood by, and seen this game played and lost so often, and by as able players as Lady Angelica Headingham—take care—Remember I warn you.”

Miss Caroline Percy came into the room at this instant—Lady Angelica went to her toilette to repair her charms.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHILST Mrs. Hungerford was wasting her good advice upon Lady Angelica, Sir James Harcourt, at his toilette, received this day's letters, which he read, as usual, while his hair was dressing.—Some of these letters were from creditors, who were impatient to hear when his *advantageous marriage* would be concluded, or when he would obtain that place which had been so long promised. The place at court, as he was this post informed by a *private, very confidential* letter, under a government cover and huge seal, from his intimate friend, my Lord Skreene, “ministers had found themselves under the unfortunate necessity of giving away, to secure three votes on a certain cabinet question.”

Sir James threw the letter from him, without reading the rest of his dear friend's official apologies—"So the place at court is out of the question, a wife must be my last resource," thought he, but how to bring her to the point?—

Sir James knew, that though he was now in high favor, he might, at some sudden turn of caprice, be discarded or deserted by his fair one, as had been the fate of so many of his predecessors.—

The ruling passion, vanity, must be touched, and the obvious means of wakening jealousy were in his power. He determined to pay *attentions* to Miss Caroline Percy: his experience in the tactics of gallantry supplying the place of knowledge of the human heart, he counterfeited the symptoms of a new passion, and acted "*The Inconstant*" so well, that Lady Angelica had no doubt of his being what he appeared. She was not prepared for this turn of fate, well as she thought she knew her game, and at this unlucky moment, just when she

wanted to play off Sir James against Mr. Barclay—and in an old castle in the country, too, where no substitute was to be had!

Her Ladyship was the more vexed, because Mrs. Hungerford must see her distress. Unused to any thing that opposed her wishes, she lost all temper, and every word and look manifested resentment and disdain towards her innocent and generous rival. In this jealousy, as there was no mixture of love to color and conceal it's nature, it could not pass for refinement of sentiment, it bore no resemblance to any thing noble, it must have been detected, even by a less penetrating and less interested observer than Mr. Barclay.—His eyes were now completely opened.

In the mean time, Caroline's character, the more it was brought into light, the more it's value, goodness, and purity appeared.—In the education of a beauty, as of a prince, it is essential early to inspire an utter contempt of

flattery, and to give the habit of observing, and consequently the power of judging of character.

Sir James Harcourt was quite astonished by the composure, with which a young girl, who looked as if she had never heard, as if she did not know that she was handsome, received the full fire of his flattery. He was mistaken, however, in thinking that she had never heard, or that she did not know she was handsome.—Her parents had not attempted, by paltry absurd deceit, to conceal from her this truth; so that there was no danger, that the pleasure of making the discovery should be suddenly and dangerously associated with a first admirer. Whilst her parents had never pretended to deny that she was handsome, they had inspired her with the ambition to be something better than a beauty, and to disdain the compliments, which are paid to mere personal charms—Nor had gentlemen much chance of imposing upon her by false

professions of love. Without being rendered suspicious, Caroline had been so well accustomed to observe whether the action was suited to the word and the word to the action, that no one could, without offending her, “overdo a passion,” even a passion for herself. She saw at once, through his assumed appearance, that Sir James Harcourt had not the slightest attachment to her; Rosamond also, whose penetration was quickened on this occasion by affection for her sister, discerned the truth immediately, and her indignation could scarcely be restrained.

Caroline, on this occasion, when, perhaps, some little temptation might have been felt by some ladies, remembered her own prayer against coquetry, her manner towards Sir James was free from all possibility of reproach or misconstruction. And by simply and steadily adhering to the truth, and going the straight road, she avoided all the difficulties in which she would have been involved, had

she deviated but for a moment into any crooked path.

It may seem small praise, that she avoided all coquetry and deception by word or look; yet those who know the world and the fair sex best will be inclined to have the highest opinion of a young lady, who entirely deserved this praise.—But to return to Lady Angelica Headingham. She was pleased to see Sir James Harcourt *at a fault*, and delighted to see him mortified. Her Ladyship's disdainful manner towards Caroline was thrown aside,

“And all the cruel language of the eye”

changed at once. Lady Angelica acknowledged, “that no one could show more magnanimity, than Miss Caroline Percy had displayed in her conduct to Sir James Harcourt.”——This speech was made of course to be repeated, and when Caroline heard it, she could not help smiling at the word magnanimity,

which sounded to her rather too grand for the occasion.

Sir James Harcourt finding himself completely foiled in his schemes, and perceiving that the parties were closing and combining in a manner which his knowledge of the world had not taught him to foresee, endeavored with all possible address and expedition, to make his separate peace with Lady Angelica. Her Ladyship, however, was proud to show, that she had too much sense and spirit, to accept again the homage of this recreant knight. He had not time to sue for pardon—his adventure might have ended in a jail. So forthwith he took his departure from Hungerford-Castle, undetermined whether he should again haste to court to beg a place, or bend his course to the city, there to barter his fashion against the solid gold of some merchant, rolling in his Majesty's coin, who might be silly enough to give his daughter, for a bow, to a courtier without a shilling. On one point, however,

Sir James was decided—betide him weal, betide him wo,—that his next mistress should neither be a wit, nor a beauty, nor yet a patroness.

After the departure of the baronet, the Lady Angelica expected to find her remaining lover at her feet, in transports of joy and gratitude for this haughty dismissal of his rival.—No such thing!—Mr. Barclay seemed disposed to throw himself at the feet of another, and of the last person in the world, at whose feet her Ladyship could bear to think of seeing him. Yet if she had even now taken Mrs. Hungerford's friendly warning, she might still have saved herself from mortification. But she was hurried on by her evil genius—the spirit of coquetry.

She had promised to pay a visit this summer to an aunt of Mr. Barclay's, Lady B——, who lived in Leicestershire. And now, when every thing was arranged for her reception, Lady Angelica changed her mind, and told Mr. Barclay, that she could not go, that she had just received

letters from town, from several of her fashionable friends, who were setting out for Weymouth; and who insisted upon her meeting them there—And there was a delightful Miss Kew, a protégée of hers, who was gone to Weymouth in the hope and trust, that her Ladyship would *produce* her and her new novel at the reading parties, which Lady Angelica had projected.—She declared that “ she could not possibly disappoint Miss Kew—besides, she had promised to carry Mr. Seebright to Weymouth, to introduce him and his poem to her friends,—his subscription and the success of his poem entirely depended upon her going to Weymouth—she could not possibly disappoint *him*.

Mr. Barclay thought more of his own disappointment—and said so—at which her Ladyship rejoiced, for she wished to make this a trial of her power; and she desired rather, that her reasons should not appear valid, and that her excuses should not be reasonable, on purpose

that she might compel Mr. Barclay to submit to her caprice, and carry him off in triumph in her train.

She carelessly repeated, that “ Leicestershire was out of the question at this time, but that Mr. Barclay might attend her, if he pleased.”—

But it did not please him—“ He did not think, that his aunt was properly treated, and he preferred her to all the bel-esprits and fine ladies who were going to Weymouth—her charming self excepted.”

She depended too much on the power of that charming self.—Mr. Barclay, whose bands she had gradually loosened, now made one resolute effort, asserted and recovered his liberty.—He declared, that “ to Weymouth he could not have the honor of attending her Ladyship—if her Ladyship thought the claims and feelings of her protégées of greater consequence than his, if she held herself more bound by the promises she had given to Mr. Seebright, Miss Kew, or any of her bel-esprit friends, than by those

with which she had honored his aunt, he could not presume to dispute her pleasure, or further to press Lady B.'s request, he could only lament—and submit."

Lady Angelica flattered herself, that this was only a bravado, or a temporary ebullition of courage, but, to her surprise and dismay, Mr. Barclay continued firm, calm, and civil.—His heart now turned to the object, on which his understanding had long since told him it should fix. He saw that Miss Caroline Percy was all that could make him happy for life, if he could win her affections. But of the possibility of succeeding he had great doubts. He had, to be sure, some circumstances in his favor: he was of a good family, and had a considerable fortune; in a worldly point of view he was a most advantageous match for Caroline Percy, but he knew, that an establishment was not the *first* object, either with her, or with her parents; neither could he wish, that any motives of interest

should operate in his favor. His character, his principles, were good, and he had reason to believe, that Mr. Percy was impressed with a highly favorable opinion of his good sense and general understanding. Caroline talked to him always as if she liked his conversation, and felt esteem for his character; but the very freedom and ease of her manner showed, that she had no thoughts of him. —He was many years older than Caroline:—he was six and thirty, and she was eighteen, this did not amount to an absolute disparity, but it was an alarming difference.—Mr. Barclay, who estimated himself with perfect impartiality and candor, was sensible, that though his temper was good, yet that it was somewhat fastidious, and though his manners were polite, yet they were reserved, they wanted that amenity, gayety, and frankness, which might be essential to win and keep a lady's heart. The more his love, the more doubts of his own deserts increased; but at last he determined to

try his fate. He caught a glimpse of Caroline one morning as she was drawing in the Oriel—Her sister and the two Lady Pembrokes were in the library, and he thought he was secure of finding her alone.

“ May I beg the favor of a few minutes he began with a voice of much emotion as he entered the room, but he stopped short at the sight of Lady Angelica.

In spite of all the rouge she wore, her Ladyship’s change of color was striking. Her lips trembled and grew pale——Mr. Barclay’s eyes fixed upon her for one moment with astonishment, then turning calmly away, he addressed himself to Caroline, his emotion recurring, though he merely spoke to her of a drawing which she was examining, and though he only said,

“ Is this yours ?”

“ Yes, Lady Angelica has just given it to me ; it is one of her drawings—a view of Weymouth.”

“ Very beautiful,” said Mr. Barclay, coldly,—“ a view of Weymouth.”

“ Where I hope to be the day after to-morrow,” cried Lady Angelica, speaking in a hurried, piqued, and haughty voice,—“ I am dying to get to Weymouth.—Mr. Barclay, if you have any letters for your friends there, I shall be happy to carry them.—Only let them be given to my woman in time,” added her Ladyship, rising; “ and now I must go and say *vivace! presto! prestissimo!* to her preparations.—Well, have you any commands?”

“ No commands—but my best wishes for your Ladyship’s health and happiness, whenever and wherever you go.”

Lady Angelica sunk down upon her seat—made a strong effort to rise again—but was unable.—Caroline, without appearing to take any notice of this, turned to Mr. Barclay, and said—“ Will you have the goodness now to give me

the book, which you were so kind as to promise me?"

Mr. Barclay went in search of it. Caroline proceeded with her drawing, gave Lady Angelica time to recover, and left her the hope, that her perturbation had not been noticed. Her Ladyship, as soon as she could, left the room, repeating that she had some orders to give for her departure.—Caroline waited some time in vain for Mr. Barclay and his book. Afterwards, as she was going up stairs, she was met by Rosamond, who, with a face full of mystery, whispered,

“Caroline my father wants you this instant in my mother’s dressing-room . . . Mr. Barclay,”—added she, in a low voice, and nodding her head, “Oh I see you know what I mean—I knew he would propose for you, I said so last night.—Now go to my father, and you will hear all the particulars.—Are the Lady Pembrokes in the library?”

“ But my dear Rosamond,” said Caroline, stopping Rosamond, “ let me beg that you will not mention this to the Lady Pembrokes.”—

“ Why not ?” said Rosamond, “ your intimate friends ! I thought you had no secrets for them ?”

“ No secrets of my own.—But I have no right to tell my most intimate friends another person’s secret.”

“ But I dare say Mr. Barclay would have no objection—I am sure it is to his credit.”

“ But I don’t know whether he would choose to have it told—I have no right to tell it. It might be . . . in all probability it will be of consequence to him, that it should not be known.—My father is waiting for me, I have not time to reason or explain further ; but I do earnestly beg, Rosamond, that you will not mention or hint it to the Lady Pembrokes, or to any one else.”

“ Not to Mrs. Mortimer ?” said Rosamond.—

“To no one—promise me!” urged Caroline, eagerly.

“Well, well, I do promise you.—Now go to my father.—You have less vanity than any one I ever saw,”—pursued Rosamond, as she went down stairs, “and how you can contrive always to think of others instead of yourself I am sure I do not know.”

“I think you might guess,” said Caroline.

Caroline heard from her father the confirmation of Rosamond’s intelligence, and she received from him and from her mother the kind assurance, that they would leave her entirely at liberty, to accept or refuse Mr. Barclay, according as her own judgment and feelings might dictate. They said, that though it might be, in point of fortune, a highly advantageous match, and though they saw nothing to which they could object in his character, understanding, and temper, yet they should not attempt to influence her in his favor.—They begged

her to decide entirely for herself, and to consult only her own happiness.

“All I insist upon, my dear daughter, is, that you should, without any idle and unjust generosity, consider first and solely what is for your own happiness.”

“And for Mr. Barclay’s”—said Caroline.

“And for Mr. Barclay’s, as far as you are concerned, but remember, the question he asks you is, whether you can love him, whether you will marry him, not whether you would advise him to love or marry somebody else.—Don’t I know all that passes in your mind?”

“Not all, perhaps,” said Caroline, “nor can I tell it you, because it is another person’s secret.—Therefore, I am sure, you will not question me further, but since you are so kind as to trust to my judgment, trust to it entirely, when I assure you that I will, without any idle or unjust generosity, consider, principally, what is for my own happiness.”

“ I am satisfied,” said Mr. Percy, “ no —one thing more—Without meaning or wishing to penetrate into any other person’s affairs, I have a full right to say to my daughter all that may be necessary, to assist her in deciding on a point the most material to her happiness. Now, Caroline,” continued her father, looking away from her, “ observe, I do not endeavor, from my knowledge of your countenance, even to guess whether what I imagine is fact. But I state to you this supposition—Suppose you had been told, that another lady is attached to Mr. Barclay.”

“ I never was told so,” interrupted Caroline, “ but I have discovered it by accident No—I have said too much—I do not think *that person* is attached to him, but that she might easily have become attached, if this proposal had been made to her, instead of to me. And I think, that their two characters are exactly suited to each other—Much better suited than mine could be to Mr. Bar-

clay, or his to me ; she has wit, and imagination, and great vivacity ; he has judgment, prudence, and solid sense ; in each there is what would compensate for what is wanting in the other, and both together would make a happy union."

" My dear Caroline," said her father, " I must put you upon your guard against the too easy faith of a sincere affectionate heart. I am really surprised that you, who have always shown such good judgment of character, should now be so totally mistaken, as to think a woman capable of a real love, who is merely acting a part from vanity and coquetry."

" Vanity ! coquetry !" repeated Caroline, " Nobody upon Earth is more free from vanity and coquetry than Surely you do not imagine I am thinking of Lady Angelica Headingham ?—Oh no : I have no compassion for her—I know, that, if she suffers from losing Mr. Barclay, it will be only from losing ' the dear-delight of giving pain,' and I should

be very sorry she ever again enjoyed that delight at Mr. Barclay's expense. I assure you I am not thinking of Lady Angelica."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Percy were in doubt, whether Caroline was thinking of her sister Rosamond, or of her friend Lady Mary Pembroke; but without attempting to discover, they only repeated that, whoever the person in question might be, or however amiable or dear to Caroline, she ought not to let this idea interfere with her own happiness, or influence her in giving an answer to Mr. Barclay's proposal, which she ought either to accept or decline, according as her own feelings and judgment should decide.—“My dear, do not determine rashly,” continued Mrs. Percy—“Now that he is your lover, Mr. Barclay will, perhaps, appear in a new light to you.—Till you have seen and considered him in this point of view, believe me, you cannot tell what your feelings may be. I request, that you will take some time to

consider, before you give Mr. Barclay any answer."

Mrs. Percy added, that perhaps Caroline might feel unwilling to take this advice, because she might have heard young ladies accused of coquetry, or *jilting*, who, after having delayed to give a decided answer to a proposal, had at last given a negative; but she said she thought such censures were absurd and unjust, for that it was impossible a young woman could always determine at once, whether a gentleman, whose character she had had no opportunities of studying, and whom she had never considered as a lover, would suit her, and make her happy for life or not.

"In the present case," continued Mrs. Percy, "your father and I will, if you wish to take time to decide, make Mr. Barclay clearly understand, that he is not to consider this as any encouragement, and as to the rest,"—added Mrs. Percy, "when you are sure that you mean right, and that you do right, you

will not, my dear Caroline, I hope, be deterred from determining upon what is best for your own happiness, merely by the weak fear of what idle foolish people will say about an affair in which they have no concern."

Caroline assured her mother, that no such weak fear acted upon her mind; and that in any case, where she had the least doubt whether she could like a person as a husband or not, she should certainly ask for time to consider, before she would give an answer: but that, with respect to Mr. Barclay, she had had sufficient opportunities of seeing and judging of him in the character of a lover, whilst he had been the admirer of Lady Angelica; that she fully appreciated his good qualities, and was grateful for his favorable opinion; but that she felt perfectly certain, that she did not and could not love him; and therefore she desired, as soon as possible, to put him out of the pain of suspense, to prevent him from having the mortification of

showing himself the admirer of one, by whom he must ultimately be refused; and to leave him at liberty to turn his thoughts elsewhere, to some person to whom he was better suited, and who was better suited to him.

Mr. Barclay had made Mrs. Hungerford alone his confidant.—As to Lady Angelica Headingham, he thought that her Ladyship could not be in any doubt of the state of his affections as far as she was concerned, and that was all she had a right to know. He never had actually declared his passion for her, and his attentions had completely ceased, since the determination she had made to break her engagement with his aunt; but Lady Angelica had still imagined, that he would not be able to bring himself to part with her for ever, and she trusted that, even at the moment of getting into her carriage, she might prevail upon him to forget his wrongs, and might at last carry him off.—These hopes had been checked, and for a moment overthrown

by Mr. Barclay's appearance this morning in the Oriel; the emotion with which she saw him speak to Caroline, and the indifference with which she heard him wish her Ladyship health and happiness at Weymouth, or wherever she went, for an instant convinced her of the truth.—But obstinate vanity recurred to the hope, that he was not yet irreclaimable, and under this persuasion she hurried on the preparations for her departure, impatient for the moment of crisis—of triumph.

The moment of crisis arrived—but not of triumph. Lady Angelica Headingham's landau came to the door.—But *trunks packed and corded* gave no pang to her former lover—Mrs. Hungerford did not press her to stay—Mr. Barclay handed her into the carriage—she stooped to conquer, so far as to tell him, that, “as she had only Mr. Seebright and her maid, she could give him a seat in her carriage, if he would come to Weymouth, and that she would thence, in

a fortnight at farthest, go to his aunt, dear Lady B——, in Leicestershire.”—But all in vain—she saw it would not do—bid her servant shut the carriage-door—desired Mr. Seebright to draw up the glass, and, with a look of angry contempt towards Mr. Barclay, threw herself back on the seat to conceal the vexation, which she could not control, and drove away for ever from irreclaimable lovers, and lost friends.—We do not envy Mr. Seebright his trip to Weymouth, with his patroness in this humor; but without troubling ourselves further to inquire what became of her, we leave her

“To flaunt, and go down a disregarded thing.”

Rosamond was never zealous in favor of Mr. Barclay. She said, that there was no occasion to pity him, because he was only soberly and quietly in love; that he had compared, and judged, and calculated well; that, after casting up his moral accounts, he had found, that be-

tween Lady Angelica Headingham, and Miss Caroline Percy, the balance of good qualities, and the chance of domestic happiness stood in favor of the latter, wherefore he had to her transferred his heart. Perhaps Rosamond was not interested in Mr. Barclay's favor, because there appeared no difficulty in his way; she thought that Caroline esteemed him more, and was more likely to marry him, than any other gentleman she had seen; and then the dénouement would be too near, too clear, and commonplace.—Rosamond said, that “in this case Caroline would just be married like any body else, to a man with a good fortune, good character, good sense, and every thing very good, but nothing extraordinary, and she would be settled at Mr. Barclay's seat in Leicestershire, and she would be Mrs. Barclay, and, perhaps, happy enough, but nothing extraordinary.”

This plain view of things, and this positive termination of all hope of romance,

did not please Rosamond's imagination. —She was relieved, when at last Caroline surprised her with the assurance, that there was no probability of Mr. Barclay's succeeding in his suit. “And yet,” said Caroline, “if I were compelled at this moment to marry, of all men I have ever yet seen Mr. Barclay is the person, to whom I could engage myself with the least reluctance—the person with whom I think I should have the best security for happiness.”

Rosamond's face again lengthened.—“If that is the case,” said she, “though you have no intention of marrying him at present, you will, I suppose, be *reasoned into* marrying him in time.”—

“No,” said Caroline, “for I cannot be reasoned into loving him.”

“There's my own, dear Caroline,” cried Rosamond, “I was horribly afraid, that this man of sense would have convinced you, that esteem was quite sufficient without love.”

“Impossible!” said Caroline. “There must be some very powerful motive, that could induce me to quit my family, my parents, my brothers and sister, the companions and friends to whom I am attached by every possible tie of gratitude, esteem, affection, long and dear habit, I can conceive no motive sufficiently powerful, except love.”—

Rosamond was delighted.—

“For what else *could* I marry,” continued Caroline, “I who am left by the kindest of parents freely to my own choice—could I marry,—for a house in Leicestershire? or for a barouche and four? on Lady Jane Granville’s principles for *an establishment*? or on the *Missy* notion of being married, and having a house of my own, and ordering my own dinner, and, like Miss Dannel in Camilla, having every day minced veal and mashed potatoes?—Was this your notion of me?” said Caroline, with a look of such surprise, that Rosa-

mond was obliged to fall immediately to protestations, and appeals to common sense.—

“How was it possible she could have formed such ideas!”

“Then why were you so much surprised and transported just now, when I told you, that no motive but love could induce me to marry?”

“I don’t recollect being surprised, I was only delighted.—I never suspected that you could marry without love, but I thought, that you and I might differ as to the quantity—the degree.”

“No common degree of love, and no common love, would be sufficient to induce me to marry,”—said Caroline.

“Once, and but once, before in your life, you gave me the idea of your having such an exalted opinion of love,” replied Rosamond.—

“But to return to Mr. Barclay,” said Caroline. “I have, as I promised my father that I would, consulted in the first place my own heart, and considered my

own happiness.—He has not made any impression upon my heart.—Independently of the difference of age, of which I should think little, if he suited me in every other respect, there is a coldness, an austerity of manner and temper, which I could not love, unless it were connected with enthusiasm of *character*. But Mr. Barclay appears to me incapable of that enthusiasm, which rises either to the moral or intellectual sublime. I respect his understanding, and esteem his principles, but . . . in conversing with him, I always feel . . . and in passing my life with him, how much more should I feel ! that there is a want of the higher qualities of the mind. He shows no invention, no genius, no magnanimity—nothing heroic, nothing great, nothing which could waken sympathy, or excite that strong attachment, which I think that I am capable of feeling for a superior character—for a character at once good and great.”—

“ And where upon Earth are you to

find such a man?—Who is romantic now?" cried Rosamond. "But I am very glad that you *are* a little romantic, I am glad that you have in you a touch of human absurdity, else how could you be my sister, or how could I love you as I do?"—

"I am heartily glad that you love me, but I am not sensible of my present immediate claim to your love by my touch of human absurdity," said Caroline, smiling.—"What did I say, that was absurd or romantic?"

"My dear, people never think their own romance absurd.—Well! granted that you are not romantic, since that is a point, which I find I must grant before we can go on.—Now, tell me, was Mr. Barclay very sorry when you refused him?" said Rosamond.

"I dare not tell you, that there is yet no danger of his breaking his heart," said Caroline.

"So I thought,"—cried Rosamond,

with a look of ineffable contempt.—“ I thought he was not a man to break his heart for love. With all his sense, I dare say he will go back to his Lady Angelica Headingham. I should not be surprised, if he went after her to Weymouth to morrow.”

“ I should,” said Caroline; “ especially as he has just ordered his carriage to take him to his aunt, Lady B——, in Leicestershire.”——

“ Oh poor man!” —said Rosamond, “ now I do pity him.”——

“ Because he is going to his aunt?”

“ No, Caroline—you are very cruel—because I am sure he is very much touched and disappointed by your refusal. He cannot bear to see you again.—Poor! *poor* Mr. Barclay! I have been shamefully ill-natured.—I hope I did not prejudice your mind against him—I’ll go directly and take leave of him—Poor Mr. Barclay!”

Rosamond, however, returned a few

minutes afterwards, to complain that Mr. Barclay had not made efforts enough to persuade Caroline to listen to him.

“ If he had been warmly in love, he would not so easily have given up hope.

‘ None, without hope, e’er lov’d the brightest fair ;
‘ But Love can hope, where Reason should despair.’

“ That, I think, is perfectly true,” said Rosamond.

Never—begging Rosamond and the poet’s pardon—never—except where Reason is very weak, or where the brightest fair has some touch of the equivocating fiend. Love . . . let poets and lovers say what they will to the contrary, can no more subsist without hope, than flame can exist without fuel. In all the cases cited to prove the contrary, we suspect that there has been some inaccuracy in the experiment, and that by mistake, a little, a very little hope has been admitted. The slightest portion, a quantity imperceptible to common observation, is known to be quite sufficient

to maintain the passion ; but a total exclusion of hope secures it's extinction.

Mr. Barclay's departure was much regretted by all at Hungerford-Castle, most, perhaps, by the person who expressed that regret the least, Lady Mary Pembroke—who now silently enjoyed the full chorus of praise, that was poured forth in honor of the departed. Lady Mary's common mode of enjoying the praise of her friends was not in silence ; all she thought and felt usually came to her lips with the ingenuous vivacity of youth and innocence. Caroline had managed so well by not managing at all, that Lady Mary, far from guessing the real cause of Mr. Barclay's sudden departure, repeatedly expressed surprise, that her aunt Hungerford did not press him to stay a little longer ; and once said, she “ wondered how Mr. Barclay *could* leave Hungerford-Castle whilst Caroline was there,—that she had begun to think he had formed an attachment, which would do him more honor

than his passion for Lady Angelica Headingham, but that she feared he would have a relapse of that fit of folly, and that it would at last end fatally in marriage.”——

Mrs. Hungerford smiled at the openness, with which her niece told her conjectures, and at the steadiness with which Caroline kept Mr. Barclay's secret, by saying no more than just the thing she ought. “The power of keeping a secret is very different from the habit of dissimulation.—You would convince me of this, if I had doubted it,” said Mrs. Hungerford to Caroline.—“Now that the affair is settled, my dear, I must insist upon your praising me, as I have praised you for discretion.—I hope I never influenced your decision by word or look, but I will now own to you, that I was very anxious, that you should decide precisely as you have done.—Mr. Barclay is a sensible man, an excellent man, one who will make any amiable woman he marries happy.—I am con-

vinced of it, or I should not, as I do, wish to see him married to my niece—yet I never thought him suited to you. Yours is a character without pretension, yet one, which, in love and marriage, would not, I believe, be easily satisfied, would require great qualities, a high tone of thought and action, a character superior and lofty as your own.”

Mrs. Hungerford paused, and seemed lost in thought. Caroline felt, that this lady had seen deeply into her mind, and that she appreciated her fully. This conviction, beyond all praise, and all demonstrations of fondness, increases affection, confidence, and gratitude, in strong and generous minds. Caroline endeavoured, but could not well express in words what she felt at this instant.

“My dear,” said Mrs. Hungerford.—“We know that we are speaking plain truth to each other.—We need no flowers of speech.—I understand you, and you understand me. We are suited to each other Yes, notwithstanding the dif-

ference of age, and a thousand other differences, we are suited to each other. This possibility of a friendship between youth and age, is one of the rewards Heaven grants to the early and late cultivation of the understanding, and of the affections. Late as it is with me in life, I have not, thank God, survived my affections.—How can I ever, whilst I have such children, such friends!” After a pause of a few moments of seemingly pleasurable reflections, Mrs. Hungerford continued—“I have never considered friendship as but a name—as a mere worldly commerce of interest.—I believe in disinterested affection, taking the word *disinterested* in it’s proper sense; and I have still, believe me, the power of sympathising with a *young* friend,—such a young friend as Caroline Percy. Early as it is with her in life, she has so cultivated her understanding, so regulated her mind, that she cannot consider friendship merely as a companionship in frivolous amusement, or a mixture of gossiping confidences.

and idle sentiment; therefore, I am proud enough to hope, that she can and will be the friend of such an old woman as I am."——

"It would be the pride of my life, to have—to deserve such a friend," cried Caroline—"I feel all the condescension of this kindness.—I know you are much too good to me.—I am afraid you think too highly of me. But Mrs. Hungerford's praise does not operate like flattery,—though it exalts me in my own opinion, it shall not make me vain,—it excites my ambition to be—all she thinks me."

"*You are all I think you,*"—said Mrs. Hungerford—"and that you may hereafter be something yet nearer than a friend to me, is the warmest wish of my heart But, no, I will not indulge myself in expressing that wish.—Such wishes are never wise where we have no power, no right to act—Such wishes often counteract their own object—Anticipations are always imprudent.

—But, about my niece, Lady Mary Pembroke. I particularly admire the discretion, still more than the kindness, with which you have acted with respect to her and Mr. Barclay—You have left things to their natural course. You have not by any imprudent zeal or generosity hazarded a word, that could hurt the delicacy of either party. You seem to have been fully aware, that wherever the affections are concerned, the human mind is most tenacious of what one half of the philosophers in the world will not allow to exist, and the other half cannot define.—Influenced as we all are every moment in our performances and aversions, sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes avowedly, by the most trifling, and often the silliest causes, yet the wisest of us start, and back, and think it incumbent on our pride in love-affairs, to resist the slightest interference, or the best advice, from the best friends.—What! love upon compulsion!—No.—Jupiter is not more tenacious of his

thunder-bolt, than Cupid is of his arrows. Blind as he is, none may presume to direct the hand of that little urchin."——

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who brought the postbag—with many letters for Mrs. Hungerford.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE arrival of the post was at this time an anxious moment to Mrs. Hungerford, as she had so many near relations and friends in the army and navy. This day brought letters, with news that lighted up her countenance with dignified joy, one from Captain Hungerford, her second son, ten minutes after an action at sea with the French.

“ Dear mother—English victorious—of course—for particulars see Gazette.—In the cockleshell I have—could do nothing worth mentioning—but am promised a ship soon—and hope for opportunity to show myself worthy to be your Son.

F. HUNGERFORD.”

“ I hope I am grateful to Providence for such children ! ”—cried Mrs. Hungerford.

Mrs. Mortimer darted upon Captain Hungerford’s name in the Gazette,—

“ And I cannot refrain from mentioning to your Lordships the gallant manner, in which I was seconded by Captain Hungerford.”

“ Happy mother ! that I am !—And more happiness still !—A letter also from my Colonel !—Thanks of commanding officer gallant conduct abroad leave of absence for three weeks and will be here to morrow ! ”—

This news spread through the Castle in a few minutes, and the whole house was in motion and in joy.

“ What is the matter,” said Rosamond, “ who had been out of the room when the Colonel’s letter was read,—As I came down stairs, I met I can’t tell how many servants running different ways, with faces of delight. I do believe Colonel Hungerford is come ? ”

“Not come, but coming.” said Mrs. Hungerford; “and I am proud that you, my friends, should see what a sensation the first sound of his return makes in his own *home*.—There it is, after all, that you may best judge what a man really is.”

Every thing conspired to give Caroline a favorable idea of Colonel Hungerford.—He arrived—and his own appearance and manners, far from contradicting, fully justified all that his friends had said. His appearance was that of a soldier and a gentleman, with a fine person, and striking countenance, with the air of command, yet without presumption; not without a consciousness of his own merit, but apparently with only a consciousness sufficient to give value and grace to his deference for others. To those he respected or loved his manner was particularly engaging; and the appropriate attentions he paid to each of his friends proved, that their peculiar tastes, their characteristic merits, and

their past kindnesses were ever full in his remembrance. To his mother his grateful affection, and the tender reverence he showed, were quite touching; and the high opinion he had of her character, and the strong influence she held over his mind, he seemed proud to avow in words and actions.—To his sister Mortimer, in a different, but not less pleasing manner, his affection appeared in a thousand little instances, which the most polite courtiers, with the most officious desire to please, could not without the happy inspiration of truth have invented. There were innumerable slight strokes in his conversation with his sister, which marked the pleasure he felt in the recollection of their early friendship, allusions to trivial *passages* in the history of their childhood, which none of the important scenes, in which he had since been engaged, had effaced from his mind—and at other times a playful carelessness that showed the lightness, the expanding freedom of heart, which can

be felt only in the perfect confidence and intimacy of domestic affection.—In his manner towards his cousins, the Lady Pembrokes, who, since he had last seen them, had grown up from children into fine young women, there were nice differences; with all the privileged familiarity of relationship he met the sprightly frankness of Lady Mary, and by a degree of delicate tender respect put the retiring sensitive timidity of Lady Elizabeth at ease. None of these shades of manner were lost upon Caroline's discriminating observation. For some time after his arrival, the whole attention of every individual, at Hungerford-Castle, was occupied by Colonel Hungerford. All were alternately talking of him, or listening to him. The eagerness, which every body felt to hear from him accounts of public and private affairs, and the multitude and variety of questions by which he was assailed, drew him out continually; so that he talked a great deal, yet evidently more to gratify others

than himself. He was always unwilling to engross the conversation, and sometimes anxious to hear from his mother and sister, of domestic occurrences; but he postponed his own gratification, and never failed to satisfy general curiosity, even by the repetition of narratives and anecdotes, till he was exhausted.—Conscious that he did not wish to make himself the hero of his tale, he threw himself upon the mercy of his friends, or their justice; and without any of the provoking reserve of affected, or cowardly humility, he talked naturally of the events in which he had taken a share, and of what concerned himself as well as others. With polite kindness, which gratified them peculiarly, he seemed to take the Percy family, as his mother's friends, directly upon trust as his own; and as if they were part of his family, he spoke before them, freely, of all his confidential opinions of men and things. He did them justice in considering them as safe auditors, and they enjoyed, and

fully appreciated the value of his various conversation. In his anecdotes of persons, there was always something decidedly characteristic of the individual, or illustrative of some general principle. In his narratives there were strong marks of the Froissart accuracy of detail, which interests by giving the impression of reality, and the proof of having been an eye witness of the scene; and sometimes, scorning detail, he displayed the power of keeping an infinite number of particulars in subordination, and of seizing those large features, which give a rapid and masterly view of the whole. For his profession he felt that enthusiasm, which commands sympathy. Whilst he spoke of the British army, those who heard him seemed to see every thing as he did in a military point of view.—Yet his love of military glory had not hardened his heart so as to render him insensible of the evils and sufferings which—alas!—it necessarily produces. The natural expression of great feeling and hu-

manity burst from him ; but he turned hastily and firmly from the contemplation of evils, which he could not prevent, and would not uselessly deplore. . In conversing one day privately with Mr. Percy he showed, that bitter and deep philosophic reflexions on the horrors and folly of war had passed through his mind, but that he had systematically and resolutely shut them out.

“ We are now,” said he, “ less likely than ever to see the time, when all the Princes of Europe will sign the good Abbé St. Pierre’s project for a perpetual peace ; and in the mean time, while kingdoms can maintain their independence, their existence, only by superiority in war, it is not for the defenders of their country, to fix their thoughts upon ‘ the price of victory.’ ”—

After explaining the plan of a battle, or the intrigues of a court, Colonel Hungerford would turn with delight to plans of cottages, which his sister Mortimer was drawing for him ; and from a

map of the seat of war he would go to a map of his own estate, eagerly asking his mother, where she would recommend that houses should be built, and consulting her about the characters and merits of those tenants, with whom his absence on the Continent had prevented him from becoming acquainted. These and a thousand other little traits showed, that his military habits had not destroyed his domestic tastes.

Caroline had taken an interest in the military profession, ever since her eldest brother had gone into the army. Colonel Hungerford was seven or eight years older than Godfrey Percy, and had a more formed, steady, and exalted character, with more knowledge, and a far more cultivated understanding; but many expressions, and some points of character, were similar. Caroline observed this, and wished and hoped, that, when her brother should have had as many opportunities of improvement, as Colonel Hungerford's experience had given him, he might

be just such a man.—This idea increased the interest she took in observing and listening to Colonel Hungerford.—After he had been some time at home, and that every day more and more of his amiable character had been developed, Rosamond said to herself,

“ This is certainly the man for Caroline, and I suspect she begins to think so.—If she does not, I never will forgive her.”

One day, when the sisters were by themselves, Rosamond tried to sound Caroline on this subject. She began, as she thought, at a safe distance from her main object.

“ How very much esteemed and beloved Colonel Hungerford is in his own family !”

“ Very much and very deservedly,” answered Caroline.—She spoke without any hesitation or embarrassment.

Rosamond, rather dissatisfied even with the fulness of the assent to her first proposition—added, “ And not only by

his own family, but by all who know him.”—

Caroline was silent.—

“It is surprising,” continued Rosamond, “that a man, who has led a soldier’s wandering life, should have acquired so much literature, such accurate knowledge, and should have retained such simple and domestic tastes.”

Full assent again from Caroline both of look and voice—but still not the exact look and voice Rosamond desired.

“Do you know, Caroline,” continued she, “I think, that in several things Colonel Hungerford is very like my brother Godfrey.”

“Yes, and in some points, I think Colonel Hungerford is superior to Godfrey,” said Caroline.

“Well, I really think so too,” cried Rosamond, “and I am sure Godfrey would think and say so himself.—How he would admire Colonel Hungerford, and how desirous, how ambitious he would be, to make such a man his friend

.... his in short, I know if Godfrey was here this minute, he would think just as I do about Colonel Hungerford and about all other things—”

“All other things!”—repeated Caroline, smiling—“that includes a great deal.”

“Yes, it does, that is certain,” said Rosamond significantly—“And,” continued she, “I know another person of excellent judgment too, who, if I mistake not, is of my way of thinking, of wishing at least, in *some things*, that is a comfort.—How Mrs. Hungerford does adore her son! And I think she loves you almost as much.”—Caroline expressed strong gratitude for Mrs. Hungerford’s kindness to her, and the warmest return of affection.

“Then in one word,” continued Rosamond, “for out it must come, sooner or later I think she not only loves you, as if you were her daughter, but that now confess, Caroline, did not the idea ever occur to you?—And don’t

you see that Mrs. Hungerford wishes it Oh ! that blush is answer enough. I'll say no more I do not mean to torment or distress good by, I am satisfied."

"Stay, my dear Rosamond, or you will run away with a mistake.—Stay one moment, and I will tell you exactly all I think and feel."

"I will stay as long as you please," said Rosamond—"and I thank you for this confidence."

"You have a right to it,"—said Caroline—"I see, my dear sister, and feel all your kindness towards me, and all Mrs. Hungerford's—I see what you both wish."

"There's my own sister Caroline, above all artifice and affectation."

"But," said Caroline.

"*But*—Oh ! Caroline, don't go back—don't 'palter with us, in a double sense.'—Abide by your own words, and your own character, and don't condescend to any pitiful *buts*."

“You do not yet know the nature of my *but*.”—

“Nor do I wish to know it, nor will I hear it,” cried Rosamond, stopping her ears, “because I know whatever it is, it will lower you in my opinion.—You have fairly acknowledged, that Colonel Hungerford possesses every virtue, public and private, that can make him worthy of you not a single fault, on which to ground one possible, imaginable, rational *but*. Temper, manners, talents, character, fortune, family, fame, every thing the heart of woman can desire.”

“Every thing against which the heart of woman should guard itself,” said Caroline.—

“Guard!—why guard?—what is it you suspect?—What crime can you invent to lay to his charge?”

“I suspect him of nothing.—It is no crime except, perhaps, in your eyes,” dear Rosamond” said Caroline, smiling—“no crime not to love me.”

“ Oh ! is that all ? now I understand and forgive you,” said Rosamond, “ if it is only *that* you fear.”

“ I do not recollect that I said I *fear*-*ed* it,” said Caroline.

“ Well, well !—I beg pardon for using that unguarded word—Of course your pride must neither hope nor fear upon the occasion ; you must quite forget yourself to stone.—As you please, or rather as you think proper ; but you will allow me to hope and fear for you.—Since I have not, thank Heaven ! made proud and vain professions of stoicism—have not vowed to throw away the rose, lest I should be pricked by the thorn.”

“ Laugh, but hear me,” said Caroline —“ I make no professions of stoicism ; it is because I am conscious that I am no stoic, that I have endeavoured to guard well my heart I have seen and admired all Colonel Hungerford’s good and amiable qualities. I have seen and been grateful for all that you and Mrs. Hungerford hoped and wished for

my happiness, have not been insensible to any of the delightful, any of the romantic circumstances of the *vision*, but I saw it was only a vision—and one that might lead me into waking, lasting misery.”

“Misery! lasting—How!” said Rosamond.

“Neither your wishes, nor Mrs. Hungerford’s, you know, can, or ought to decide, or even to influence the event, that is to be determined by Colonel Hungerford’s own judgment and feelings, and by mine.—In the mean time, I cannot forget, that the delicacy, honor, pride, prudence of our sex, forbid a woman to think of any man, as a lover, till he gives her reason to believe, that he feels love for her.”

“Certainly,” said Rosamond—“but I take it for granted that Colonel Hungerford does love you.”

“But why should we take it for granted?” said Caroline. “He has not shown me any preference.”

“Why ! I don’t know, I am not skilled in these matters,” said Rosamond, “ I am not sure but I think and yet I should be sorry to mislead you At any rate there is no harm in hoping”

“If there be no harm, there might be much danger,” said Caroline, “better not to think of the subject at all, since we can do no good by thinking of it, and may do harm.”—

“Better, no doubt,” said Rosamond—“Right, no doubt, and fine as any maxim of philosophy I ever heard—in theory—but the practice is the difficulty—I won’t say the impossibility—But seriously and honestly, Caroline, would you have me believe that you have never . . . never thought of Colonel Hungerford.”

“As a lover—never.”—

“Upon your word?”

“Upon my word I never allowed myself to think of him as a lover.”

“That is, you never regularly sat down, and said to yourself, ‘now I am

thinking,' or 'now I will suffer myself to think of Colonel Hungerford,'—but *sans y penser*, there might be some little Hey?—And now I force you to think on this forbidden, this horrid subject confess that you have some little partiality for him.”—

“No; I assure you that I do not feel any *partiality*,” said Caroline, “and you may, you must believe me.”

“If I must, I must,” said Rosamond. After a pause of surprise, disappointment, and reflection, Rosamond resumed,

“So I am to understand it to be your opinion, that a woman of sense, delicacy, proper pride, honor and prudence, must, can, and ought to shut her eyes, ears, understanding, and heart, against all the merit, and all the powers of pleasing a man may possess, till said man shall and do make a matrimonial proposal for her in due form—Hey! Caroline?”

“I never thought any such thing,” answered Caroline, “and I expressed

myself very ill if I said any such thing. A woman need not shut her eyes, ears, or understanding to a man's merit—only her heart.”—

“Then the irresistible charm, the supreme merit, the only merit that can or ought to touch her heart in any man, is the simple or glorious circumstance of his loving her?”

“I never heard that it was a man's supreme merit to love,” said Caroline, “but we are not at present inquiring, what is a man's, but what is a woman's characteristic excellence.—And I have heard it said to be a woman's supreme merit, and grace, and dignity, that her love should *not unsought be won.*”

“That is true,” said Rosamond—“perfectly true—in general—But surely you will allow, that there may be cases in which it would be difficult to adhere to the letter as well as to the spirit of this excellent rule.—Have you never felt?—Can't you imagine this?”

“I can well imagine it,” said Caroline,

“fortunately I have never felt it.—If I had not early perceived, that Colonel Hungerford was not thinking of me, I might have deceived myself with false hopes.—Believe me, I was never insensible to his merit.”

“But where is the merit or the glory, if there was no struggle, no difficulty?” said Rosamond, in a melancholy tone.

—“Glory there is none,” said Caroline, “nor do I claim any merit; but is not it something to prevent struggle and difficulty? Is it nothing to preserve my own happiness?”

“Something to be sure,” said Rosamond. “But on the other hand, you know there is the old proverb, ‘Nothing hazard, nothing have.’”

“That is a masculine, not a feminine proverb,” said Caroline, “else, acting upon that principle, we should come presently to *a bold stroke for a husband.*”

—Rosamond blushed, retracted her proverb, and utterly disclaimed the idea of a bold stroke.

“ All I meant to say was, that there is no rule without an exception, as all your philosophers, even the most rigid, allow : And if an exception be ever permitted, surely in such a case as this it might, in favor of such a man as Colonel Hungerford.”

“ Dangerous exceptions !” said Caroline. “ Every body is too apt to make an exception in such cases in their own favor.—That, you know, is the common error of the weak.—Oh ! my dear sister, instead of weakening, strengthen my mind—Instead of trying to raise my enthusiasm, or reproaching me for want of sensibility, tell me that you approve of my exerting all my power over myself to do that which I think right. Consider what evil I should bring upon myself, if I became attached to a man, who is not attached to me. If you saw me sinking, an object of pity and contempt, the victim, the slave of an unhappy passion.”

“ Oh ! my dear, dear Caroline, that could never be——God forbid ! Oh ! God

forbid!"—cried Rosamond, with a look of terror—but recovering herself, she added, —"This is a vain fear. With your strength of mind, you could never be reduced to such a condition."

"Who can answer for their strength of mind in the second trial, if it fail in the first?" said Caroline. "If a woman once lets her affections go out of her power, how can she afterwards answer for her own happiness?"

"All very right and very true," said Rosamond—"But for a young person, Caroline, I could spare some of this premature reason. If there be some folly, at least there is some generosity, some sensibility often joined with a romantic temper.—Take care lest you 'mistake reverse of wrong for right,' and in your great zeal to avoid romance, run into selfishness."—

"Selfishness!"

"Why—yes—after all, what are these cold calculations about loving or not loving such a character as Colonel Hunger-

ford; what is all this wonderfully long-sighted care of your own individual happiness, but selfishness—moral, very moral selfishness, I grant.”

Caroline colored—paused—and when she answered, she spoke in a lower and graver tone and manner than usual.

“If it be selfish to pursue, by the best means in my power, and by means which cannot hurt any human being, my own happiness, must I deserve to be called selfish.—Unless a woman be quite unconnected with others in society, without a family, and without friends,—which, I thank God, is not my situation,—it is impossible to hazard or to destroy our own happiness by any kind of imprudence, without destroying the happiness of others.—Therefore imprudence, call it romance, or what you please, is often want of generosity—want of thought for the happiness of our friends, as well as for our own.”—

“Well, come off!” said Rosamond, laughing, “you have proved, with ad-

mirable logic, that prudence is the height of generosity.—But, my dear Caroline, do not speak so very seriously, and do not look with such ‘sweet austere composure.’—I don’t in earnest accuse you of selfishness.—I was wrong to use that ugly word.—But I was vexed with you for being more prudent than even good old Mrs. Hungerford.”

At these words tears filled Caroline’s eyes. “Dear! kind! Mrs. Hungerford,” she exclaimed, “in the warmth of her heart, in the fullness of her kindness for me, once in her life Mrs. Hungerford said—perhaps an imprudent word, expressed a wish, of which her better judgment may have repented.”——

“No, no!”—cried Rosamond, “her better, her best judgment must have confirmed her opinion of you.—She never will repent of that wish.—Why! should you think she has repented of it, Caroline?”

“Because she must by this time see, that there is no probability of that wish

being accomplished.—She must, therefore, desire that it should be forgotten.—And I trust I have acted, and shall always act, as if it were forgotten by me—except as to it's kindness, *that* I shall remember while I have life and feeling.—But if I had built a romance upon that slight word, consider how much that excellent friend would blame herself, when she found that she had misled me, that she had been the cause of anguish to my heart—that she had lowered, in the opinion of all, even in her own opinion, the girl she had once so exalted by her approbation and friendship.—And Oh! consider, Rosamond, what a return should I make for that friendship, if I were to be the occasion of any misunderstanding, any disagreement, between her and her darling son. If *I* were to become the rival of her beloved niece!”

“Rival!—Niece!—How!—Which!” cried Rosamond, “Which,” repeated she eagerly,—“I cannot think of any thing else, till you say which.”

“Suppose Lady Elizabeth.”——

“The thought never occurred to me—
Is it possible?—My dear Caroline, you
have opened my eyes you have
brought a host of terrors upon me!”——

“Terrors!—why terrors?” said Caroline, smiling, “it might have been terrible indeed to me, that Colonel Hungerford should love another, if I had become attached to him; but I have avoided that misery,—and now, if my friend should be the object of his preference, I can rejoice and sympathize in her happiness.”——

“But are you sure? Then you have acted wisely, rightly, Caroline; and I have as usual been very, *very* imprudent. Forgive what I said about selfishness,—I was unjust—You selfish! you who thought of all your friends, I thought only of you. But tell me, did you think of Lady Elizabeth from the first.—Did you see how it would be from the very first?”——

“No; I never thought it till yester-

day, and I am not sure of it to day.”—

“Then you acted merely from general principle, from prudence?”—

“Yes,” answered Caroline.

“There again you vex me,” cried Rosamond—“Could you not as well at once have told me, it was all generosity?—So you never thought of it till yesterday! And you are not sure of it to day?—Then I dare say you are mistaken, and wrong, with all your superfluous prudence. I will observe with my own eyes, and trust only my own judgment.”—

With this laudable resolution Rosamond departed.

The next morning she had an opportunity of observing, and deciding by her own judgment.—Lady Elizabeth Pembroke and Caroline had both been copying a picture of Sir Philip Sidney when a boy.—They had finished their copies. Mrs. Hungerford showed them to her son. Lady Elizabeth’s was rather the superior painting. Colonel Hungerford

instantly distinguished it, and, in strong terms, expressed his admiration; but, by some mistake, he fancied that both copies were done by Caroline; she explained to him that that which he preferred was Lady Elizabeth's.

“Yours!”—exclaimed Colonel Hungerford, turning to Lady Elizabeth with a look and tone of delighted surprise—Lady Elizabeth colored—Lady Mary smiled—he forbore adding one word either of praise or observation.—Caroline gently relieved Mrs. Hungerford's hand from her copy of the picture which she still held.

Rosamond, breathless, looked and looked, and waited for something more decisive.

“My mother wished for a copy of this picture,” said Lady Elizabeth, in a tremulous voice, and without raising her eyes,—“for we have none but a vile daub of him at Pembroke.”

“Perhaps my aunt Pembroke would

be so good to accept of the original?" said Colonel Hungerford, "and my mother would beg of Lady Elizabeth to give her copy to . . . our gallery."

"Do, my dear Elizabeth," said Mrs. Hungerford.

Lady Elizabeth shook her head, yet smiled.

"Do, my dear, you cannot refuse your cousin."

"*Cousin!* there's hope still," thought Rosamond.

"If it were but worthy of his acceptance," said Lady Elizabeth.—Colonel Hungerford, lost in the enjoyment of her self-timidity and retiring grace, quite forgot to say how much he thought the picture worthy of his acceptance.

His mother spoke for him.

"Since Hungerford asks you for it, my dear, you may be certain, that he thinks highly of it, for my son never flatters."

"Who? I!—flatter!"—cried Colonel Hungerford,—“flatter!” added he, in a low voice, with a tenderness of accent,

and look, which could scarcely be misunderstood. Nor was it misunderstood by Lady Elizabeth, as her quick varying color showed.—It was well that, at this moment, no eye turned upon Rosamond, for all her thoughts and feeling could have been read in her face.

“Come,” cried Lady Mary, “Let us have the picture in it’s place directly,—Come all of you to the gallery, fix where it shall be hung.” Colonel Hungerford seized upon it, and offering his arm to Lady Elizabeth, followed Lady Mary to the gallery.—Mrs. Hungerford rose deliberately—Caroline offered her arm.—

“Yes, my dear child, let me lean upon you.”——

They walked slowly after the young party——Rosamond followed.—

“I am afraid,”—said Mrs. Hungerford, as she leaned more upon Caroline. “I am afraid I shall tire you, my dear.”

“Oh ! no, no !” said Caroline, “not in the least.”

“I am growing so infirm, that I re-

quire a stronger arm, a kinder I can never have."—

The door of the antichamber, which opened into the gallery, closed after the young people.

"I am not one of those *exigente* mothers, who expect always to have possession of a son's arm," resumed Mrs. Hungerford, "The time, I knew, would come, when I must give up my Colonel."

"And with pleasure, I am sure, you now give him up, secure of his happiness,"—said Caroline.

Mrs. Hungerford stopped short, and looked full on Caroline, upon whom she had previously avoided to turn her eyes.—From what anxiety did Caroline's serene, open countenance, and sweet ingenuous smile, at this instant, relieve her friend. Old as she was, Mrs. Hungerford had quick and strong feelings. For a moment she could not speak.—She held out her arms to Caroline, and folded her to her heart.

“Excellent creature!” said she,—
“Child of my affections—*that* you must
ever be!”—

“Oh, Mrs. Hungerford! my dear Ma-
dam,” cried Rosamond, “You have no
idea how unjust and imprudent I have
been about Caroline.”

“My love,” said Mrs. Hungerford,
smiling, and wiping tears from her eyes,
“I fancy I can form a competent idea of
your imprudence from my own.—We
must all learn discretion from this dear
girl—You, early—I, late in life.”—

“Dear Rosamond, do not reproach
yourself; for your excessive kindness to
me,”—said Caroline, “In candor and
generous feeling, who is equal to you?”

“Kissing one another, I protest,”—
cried Lady Mary Pembroke, opening the
door from the gallery, whilst we were
wondering you did not come after us.—
Aunt Hungerford, you know how we
looked for the bow and arrows, and the
peaked shoes, with the knee-chains of the

time of Edward the Fourth. Well, they are all behind the great armory press, which Gustavus has been moving to make room for Elizabeth's picture of Sir Philip Sidney. Do come and look at them—but stay, first I have a favor to beg of you, Caroline. I know Gustavus will ask my sister to ride with him this morning, and the flies torment her horse so, and she is such a coward, that she will not be able to listen to a word that is said to her. . . . Could you lend her your pretty gentle White Surrey?"

"With pleasure," said Caroline, "and my net."

"I will go and bring it to your Ladyship," said Rosamond.

"My Ladyship is in no hurry," cried Lady Mary—"Don't run away . . . don't go . . . it is not wanted yet."—

But Rosamond, glad to escape, ran away, saying—"There is some of the fringe off—I must sew it on."—

Rosamond, as she sewed on the fringe,

sighed,—and worked,—and wished it was for Caroline, and said to herself.

“ So it is all over—and all in vain ! ”

And she felt vexed . . . as a child when the table is suddenly shaken, and it's card house is thrown down ; disconsolate as a philosopher, convinced, against his will, that his favorite castle in the air is but a baseless fabric.

The horses for the happy riding party came to the door. Rosamond ran down stairs with the net ; Caroline had it put on her horse, and Lady Elizabeth Pembroke thanked her with such a look of kindness, of secure faith in her friend's sympathy, that even Rosamond forgave her for being happy.—But Rosamond could not wish to stay to witness her happiness just at this time ; and she was not sorry, when her father announced the next day, that business required his immediate return home.—Lamentations, loud and sincere, were heard from every individual in the castle, especially from Mrs. Hungerford,

and from her daughter. They were, however, too well bred to persist in their solicitations to have the visit prolonged.

They said they were grateful for the time which had been given to them, and appeared kindly satisfied with their friends' promise to repeat their visit, whenever they could with convenience.

Caroline, tenderly and gratefully attached to Mrs. Hungerford, found it very difficult and painful to part from her; the more painful because she feared to express all the affection, admiration, and gratitude she felt for this excellent friend, lest, if she yielded to the natural sensibility of her heart, her emotion might be misinterpreted.—Mrs. Hungerford understood her thoroughly. When she took leave of Caroline, she kissed her at first in silence, and then, by a few strong words, and more by her manner than by her words, expressed her high esteem and affection for her young friend.

Regretted by young and old, at peace
in her own mind,

“That sweet peace, which goodness bosoms ever,”

Caroline returned home, satisfied with
the present, and not anxious for the fu-
ture.

CHAPTER XIX.

*Letter from Dr. Percy to his sister
Rosamond.*

I NEVER told you, my dear Rosamond, that the beautiful Constance was Mr. Gresham's daughter; I told you only that I saw her at his house. To the best of my belief, she is no relation to him. She is daughter to Mr. Gresham's sick partner.—And this partner,—now Rosamond, here is coincidence, if not romance, enough to please you—this partner is Mr. Panton, the London correspondent of the shipwrecked Dutch merchants, the very Panton and Co., to whom my father lately wrote to recommend Godfrey's friend, young Captain Henry—captain no more.—I have not seen him yet, he is invisible in the count-

ing-house, in the remote city, in ultimate Broad-Street, far as pole from pole, from me at *Mrs. Panton's* fine house in Grosvenor Square.

“ But now to have done with an old story, before I begin with a new—I will tell you at once all I know, or probably shall ever know, about Constance. She is sole heiress to her father's fortune, which, on his repeated word, I believe, amounts to hundreds of thousands. She is accomplished, and amiable, and, as I told you before, beautiful: but luckily her style of beauty, which is that of one of Rubens's wives, does not particularly strike my fancy, otherwise I should, even at the hazard of letting the fat father die of hypochondriacism, and at the danger of losing that introduction to practice in the city, of which I have reason to hope from his care, avoid the temptation of seeing Miss Panton as I do every day.

“ Even if it were honorably in my power, I should not like to make my fortune, as it is called, by marriage; at least I

never yet saw the woman to whom I would put myself under this species of obligation.—Love might bend me to it, but nothing else could.—You will call it pride, perhaps, but I would rather owe my rise in the world to my own exertions, than to the favor even of a fair lady.—Besides, I would really and truly rather have a profession, than be an idle gentleman; I love my profession, and feel ambitious to distinguish myself in it, and to make you all proud of your brother, Dr. Percy.—These general principles are strengthened beyond the possibility of doubt, by the particular circumstances of *the present case*. A young unknown physician, I have been introduced by a friend to this family, and have, in my medical capacity, been admitted to a degree of familiarity in the house, which none shall ever have cause to repent.—Physicians, I think, more than men in any other profession, are called upon for scrupulous *good faith*, because in some respects they are more trusted in families, and have

more opportunities of intimacy, than those of any other profession. I know, my dear Rosamond, you will not suspect me of assuming fine sentiments that are foreign to my real feelings; but I must now inform you, that if I were the greatest scoundrel upon Earth, and if I could make myself agreeable and acceptable to Miss Panton, and if it were equally in my will, and in my power, to take advantage of the confidence reposed in me, and to rob this old man of his daughter, yet I should never be, in the language of the market, one shilling the better for her.—Her father, a man of low birth, and having, perhaps, in spite of his wealth, suffered from the proud man's contumely, has determined to ennoble his family by means of his only child, and she is not to enjoy his fortune, unless she marry one who has a title.—If she unites herself with any man below the rank of a baron's son, he swears she shall never see the color of sixpence of his money.—I understand, that a certain Lord

Roadster, eldest son of Lord Runnymede, is the present candidate for her favor—or rather, for her wealth; and that his Lordship is *patronised* by her father.—Every thing that could be done by the vulgar selfishness and monied pride of her father and mother in law, to spoil Miss Panton, and to make her consider herself as the first and only object of consequence in this world, has been done—and yet she is not in the least spoiled.—Shame to all systems of education! there are some natures so good, that they will go right, where all about them go wrong.—My father will not admit this, and will exclaim, Nonsense!—I will try to say something, that he will allow to be sense.—Miss Panton's own mother was of a good family, and, I am told, was an amiable woman, of agreeable manners, and a cultivated mind, who had been sacrificed for fortune to this rich city husband. Her daughter's first principles and ideas of manners and morals were formed by her precepts and example.—

After her mother's death, she had the advantage of an excellent and enlightened friend in her father's partner, Mr. Gresham, who, having no children of his own, took pleasure, at all his leisure moments, in cultivating little Constance.—Then the contrast between her parents and him, between their ignorance and his enlightened liberality, must have early struck her mind, and thus, I suppose, by observing their faults and follies, she learned to form for herself an opposite character and manners.—No one, however, by her behaviour to her father and mother, would believe that she perceived they had any defects, she treats them with such propriety and deference.—Mrs. Panton, who, by the by, is only her mother-in-law—Mrs. Panton is a huge, protuberant woman, with a full blown face, a bay wig, and artificial flowers; talking in an affected little voice, when she is in company, and when she has on her *company clothes and manners*, but bawling loud, in a vulgarly broad cock-

ney dialect, when she is at her ease in her own house.—She has an inordinate passion for dress, and a *rage* for fine people. I have a chance of becoming a favorite, because I am ‘of a good *fammully*, and Mrs. Panton says, ‘she knows very well I have been egg and bird in the best company.’—

“My patient Observe, my patient is the last person of whom I speak or think.—My patient is nervous, and hypochondriac, and just a man of whom one mercenary physician might write to another, ‘*I send you a fat goose, you know how to pluck it.*’—As I do not believe, that you have much taste for medical detail, I shall not trouble you with the particulars of this old gentleman’s case; but pray for his recovery, for if I succeed in setting him up again, it will set me up
* * * * * For the first time I have this day, after many calls, seen Godfrey’s friend, young Mr. Henry.—He is handsome, and, as you ladies say, *interesting*.—He is particularly

gentleman-like in his manners; but he looks unhappy, and I thought he was reserved towards me.—But I have no right yet to expect that he should be otherwise.—He spoke of Godfrey with strong affection.

Yours, truly,

ERASMUS PERCY."

In the care of Mr. Panton's health, Dr. Percy was now the immediate successor to a certain apothecary of the name of Cox eater, who, by right of flattery, had reigned for many years over the family with arbitrary sway, till he offended the lady of the house by agreeing with her husband upon some disputed point about a julep. The apothecary had a terrible loss of old Panton, for he swallowed more drugs in the course of a week, than any man in the city swallows in a year. At the same time, he was so economical of these very drugs, that when Dr. Percy ordered the removal from his bedchamber of a range of half

full phials, he was actually near crying at the thoughts of the waste of such a quantity of good physic, and “that it might do somebody good,” he insisted upon his footman’s swallowing, in his presence, “*the bottoms of the bottles.*”—Dr. Percy’s explanation of the nature of the drugs, and remonstrances against the jarring mixtures he would make in the poor fellow’s stomach, were of no more avail than the wry faces of the patient. Old Panton stuck to his point, repeating, that “It was a sin to throw away so much good physic, which had been all paid for, and that if he did not take it himself, somebody else in the family should.”—He finished, by turning away the footman for refusing to swallow the dregs of the last bottle.—Panton was obstinate by fits, but touch his fears about his health, and he would be as docile as the *malade imaginaire* to his wife, or as my Lord Fortagral was to his physician, on the days when his Lordship did not digest well.—This merchant, re-

tired from business, was now as much engrossed with his health, as ever he had been with his wealth.

When Dr. Percy was first called in, he found his patient in a lamentable state, in an arm chair, dying with the apprehension of having swallowed in a peach a live earwig, which he was persuaded had bred, was breeding, or would breed in his stomach. However ridiculous this fancy may appear, it had taken such hold of the man, that he was really wasting away,—his appetite failing as well as his spirits.—He would not take the least exercise, or stir from his chair, scarcely move or permit himself to be moved, hand, foot, or head, lest he should disturb or waken this nest of earwigs. Whilst these “*reptiles*” slept, he said, he had rest, but when they wakened, he felt them crawling about and pinching his intestines.—The wife had laughed, and the apothecary had flattered in vain: Panton angrily persisted in the assertion, that he should die—and

then they'd "see who was right."—Dr. Percy recollected a case, which he had heard from a celebrated physician, of a hypochondriac, who fancied that his intestines were sealed up by a piece of wax which he had swallowed, and who, in this belief, refused to eat or drink any thing.—Instead of fighting against the fancy, the judicious physician humored it—showed the patient sealing wax dissolving in spirit of wine, and then persuaded him to take some of that spirit to produce the same effect. The patient acceded to the reasoning, took the remedy, said that he felt that his intestines were unsealing . . . were unsealed—but, alas! they had been sealed so long, that they had lost their natural powers and actions, and he died lamenting that his excellent physician had not been called in soon enough.—

Dr. Percy was more fortunate, for he came in time to kill the earwigs for his patient before they had pinched him to

death. Erasmus showed Mr. Panton the experiment of killing one of these insects, by placing it within a magic circle of oil, and prevailed upon him to destroy his diminutive enemies with castor oil. When this *hallucination*, to speak in words of learned length,—when this hallucination was removed, there was still a more difficult task, to cure our hypochondriac of the three remote causes of his disease—idleness of mind—indolence of body—and the habit of drinking every day a bottle of *London particular*; to prevail upon him to diminish the quantity per diem, was deemed impossible by his wife; especially as Mr. Coxeter, the apothecary, had flattered him with the notion, that *to live high* was necessary for a gouty constitution, and that he was gouty.—N. B. He never had the gout in his life.

Mrs. Panton augured ill of Dr. Percy's success, and Constance grew pale when he touched upon this dangerous point.

Yet he had hopes.—He recollected the ingenious manner in which Dr. Brown* worked upon a highland chieftain, to induce him to diminish his diurnal quantity of *spirituous potation*. But here was no family pride to work upon, at least no family arms were to be had. Erasmus found a succedaneum, however, in the love of titles and of what are called *fine people*. Lord Runnymede had given Mr. Panton a golden beaker of curious workmanship, on which his Lordship's arms were engraved; of this present the citizen was very fond and vain: observing this, Dr. Percy was determined to render it subservient to his purposes. He knew they would be right glad of any opportunity of producing and talking of this beaker to all their acquaintance.—He therefore advised—no, not *advised*,—for with some minds if you *advise* you are not listened to, if you command you are obeyed. He commanded that his pa-

* Vide Life of Dr. Brown.

tient should have his madeira always decanted into the curious beaker, for certain galvanic advantages that every knowing porter drinker is aware of—Erasmus emptied a decanter of Madeira into the beaker to show that it held more than a quart. This last circumstance decided Mr. Panton to give a solemn promise to abide by the advice of his physician, who seized this auspicious moment to act upon the imagination of his patient, by various medical anecdotes. Mr. Panton seemed to be much struck with the account of bottles made of antimonial glass, which continue, for years, to impregnate successive quantities of liquor with the same antimonial virtues. Dr. Percy then produced a piece of colored crystal about the size of a large nut, which he directed his patient to put into the beaker, and to add another of these medicated crystals every day, till the vessel should be half full, to increase the power of the drug by successive additions, and by this ar-

rangement, Panton was gradually reduced to half his usual quantity of wine.

Dr. Percy's next difficulty was how to supply the purse-full and purse-proud citizen with motive and occupation. Mr. Panton had an utter aversion and contempt for all science and literature; he could not conceive that any man "could sit down to read for amusement," but he enjoyed a party of pleasure in a good boat on the water, to one of the *aits* or islets in the Thames at the right season, to be regaled with eel-pie. One book he had read, and one play he liked—no, not a play, but a pantomime. The book was Robinson Crusoe, the pantomime Harlequin Friday. He had been heard to say, that if ever he had a villa, there should be in it an island like Robinson Crusoe's, and why not a fortress, a castle, and a grotto? this would be something new, and why should not he have his fancy, and why should not there be *Panton's Folly* as well as any of the thou-

sand *Follies* in England?—Surely he was rich enough to have a Folly.—His physician cherished this bright idea. Mrs. Panton was all this time dying to have a villa on the Thames. Dr. Percy proposed, that one should be made on Mr. Panton's plan. The villa was bought, and every day the hypochondriac hypochondriac now no more went to his Villa-Crusoe, where he fussed, and furbished, and toiled at his desert island in the Thames, as hard as ever he labored to make his *plum* in the counting-house.—In *due course* he recovered his health, and, to use his own expression, became “as alert as any man in all England of his inches in the girt, thanks be to Dr. Percy!”—

We find the following letter from Dr. Percy, written, as it appears, some months after his first attendance upon Mr. Panton.

“Yes, my dear friends at home, Alfred tells you truth, and does not flatter much. The having set up again this

old citizen, who was thought bankrupt in constitution, has done me honor in the city, and, as Alfred assures you, has spread my name through Broad-street, and Fleet-street, and Milk-street, embracing the wide extremes between High Holborn and St. Mary Axe,

‘ And even Islington has heard my fame.’

“ In earnest, I am getting fast into practice in the city—and Rosamond must not turn up her aristocratic lip at the city—Very *good* men, in every sense of the word, some of the best men I know, inhabit what she is pleased to call the wrong end of the town.

“ Mr. Gresham is unceasing and indefatigable in his kindness to me. I consider it as an instance of this kindness, that he has found employment for my poor friend, O’Brien, has made him his porter, a pleasanter place than he had with the painter that pleased nobody. O’Brien sees me almost every day, and

rejoices in what he calls my prosperity.

“ ‘ Heaven for ever prosper your Honor,’ is the beginning and end of all he says, and, I believe, of all he thinks.—Is not it singular, that my first step towards getting into practice should have been prepared by that which seemed to threaten my ruin—the quarrel with Frumpton within the verge of his hospital?—

“ A delicacy strikes me, and begins at this moment, in the midst of my prosperity, to make my pride uneasy.

“ I am afraid, that my father should say Erasmus gets on by patronage after all,—by the patronage of a poor Irish porter, and a rich English merchant.—Pray make my father explain to me exactly his ideas.—Is the assistance of friends to be called patronage? I beg my father will write to me soon on this subject—if it be only *yes* or *no* to this plain question, to quiet my troubled spirit.

“ Adieu, my dear friends, you must not expect such long letters from me now that I am becoming a busy man. Alfred and I see but little of one another, we live at such a distance, and we are both so gloriously industrious.—But we have holiday minutes, when we meet and talk more in the same space of time, than any two wise men I did not say, women that you ever saw.

“ Yours, affectionately,

“ ERASMUS PERCY.

“ Sunday morning.

“ P. S. I have just recollected, that I forgot to answer your question about Mr. Henry.—I do see him whenever I have time to go, and whenever he will come to Mr. Gresham's, which is very seldom.—Mr. Gresham has begged him repeatedly to come to his house every Sunday, when Henry must undoubtedly be at leisure.—Yet Mr. Henry has been there but seldom since the first six weeks after he came to London.—I cannot yet

understand whether this arises from pride, or from some better motive. Mr. Gresham says he likes what he has seen of him, and well observes, that a young officer, who has lived a gay life in the army, must have great power over his own habits, and something uncommon in his character, to be both willing and able thus suddenly and completely to change his mode of life, and to conform to all the restraints and disagreeable circumstances of his new situation.

“ I hope my father will answer my question very explicitly—and, without fail, *by return of the post*, as an impatient school-boy always says.”

Extract of a letter from Mr. Percy, to Erasmus Percy.

“ * * * * * I cannot have been sufficiently explicit in stating my opinions respecting patronage, since you, my dear son, could so far mistake my meaning, as to imagine that I should object to your receiving assistance from

your friends to advance yourself in your profession.—Friends which have been made for you by your parents, I consider as part of your patrimony. I inherited many from my father, for which I respect and bless his name. During the course of my life, I have had the happiness of gaining the regard of some persons of talents and virtue, some of them in high station; this regard will extend to my children while I live, and descend to them when I am no more. I never *cultivated* them with a view to advancing my family, but I make no doubt that their friendship will assist my sons in their progress through their several professions. I hold it to be just and right, that friends should give, and that young men should gratefully accept, all the means and opportunities of bringing professional acquirements and abilities into notice. Afterwards, the merit of the candidate, and his fitness for any given situation ought, and probably will, ultimately decide whether the assistance has

been properly or improperly given. If family friends procure for any young man a reward of any kind which he has not merited, I should object to that, as much as if the place or the reward had been bestowed by a professed patron, from political or other interested motives. —If my friends were to assist you *merely* because you were my sons, bore my name, or represented that which you can no longer represent, the Percy estate, I should not think this just or honorable; but your being my sons ought, in another point of view, to influence them in your favor; they know the principles which have been instilled into you, the education you have received, the examples you have seen,—from all these, they can form a judgment of what you are likely to be, and for what situations you are qualified, therefore it is but reasonable, that they should recommend you preferably to strangers, perhaps of equal ability. They may and ought to begin with this prepossession or this presump-

tion in your favor, but I trust they will end with a conviction of it's being justified.— If not, their influence should cease to be exerted. In short, every young man has, or may have friends, and they will do all they can to assist him ; if they do so according to his merits, they do well ; if in spite of his demerits, they do ill ; but whilst nothing is practised to prevent the course of free competition, or to discourage active emulation, there can be no evil to the community, there is no injurious patronage.—So much for family friends.—Now as to friends of your own making—Surely, my dear son, they are as much your own earning, and all the advantages they can be to you is as honorably yours, as your fees. Whatever assistance you may receive from Mr. Gresham, I consider in this light.—As to gratitude—I acknowledge that in some cases gratitude might be guilty of partial patronage—but I do not think you have much to fear on this head, and you need not trouble yourself with

scruples about your patron, the grateful Irish porter.—In the first place it was, strictly speaking, for an instance of professional merit, humanity, and civil courage, that this man had reason to be obliged to you—all he has done, or could do in return, was to make your conduct known, and thus he has obtained for you, opportunities of showing what farther professional merit you may possess.—

“ If you had saved a minister of state from breaking his neck, and he in return had made you surgeon-general to our armies, without knowing whether you were qualified for that situation, I should call that partial and pernicious patronage.—But if you had cured a great man of a dangerous disease, and he afterwards exerted himself to recommend you as a physician to his friends and acquaintance, this I should consider as part of your fit reward.

“ So now, my dear son, I hope you fully understand me, and that you will

not torment yourself with idle scruples, or attribute to me false delicacies, and a prudery, a puritanism of independence, which I utterly disclaim.—Go on and prosper, and depend upon the warm sympathy and entire approbation of your affectionate father,

L. PERCY.”

Letter from Alfred Percy to Mrs. Percy.

“ MY DEAR MOTHER,

Notwithstanding Rosamond’s dread of such a commonplace ending for her heroine, I own, that from all I have heard of Mr. Barclay, if he had been *but* ten years’ younger, and a little more of a laughing philosopher and if Caroline could *but* have loved him, I should have been very glad to have had him for a brother-in-law ; *but* since these things cannot be, I regret as little as possible, that the Leicestershire estate is not to come into our family, and that I have not the drawing of the marriage settlements. I feel the love of money,

and still more the love of landed property growing fast upon me, as I look over parchments and hear of fees—hear of fees, for I am not come to touching many. What a miser I shall become when I actually touch them, if the bare imagination of a fee can thus act upon my mercenary propensities!

“ Give my love to Rosamond, and thanks for her letters from Hungerford-Castle. I rejoice that change of fortune has made no change in your reception there. Rosamond’s letters were great delight to me, and I kept them always to read when the business of the day was done, and I read them by my single candle in my lone chamber.—I would rather live in my lone chamber all my days, and never see a wax-light all my nights, than be married to your Lady Angelica Headingham. I give Mr. Barclay joy of having escaped from her charms. I prefer an indenture tripartite, however musty or tiresome, to a triple tyrant, however fair or entertaining.

“ So you expect me to be very entertaining next vacation, and you expect to hear all I have seen, heard, felt, and understood, since I came to London. Alas ! Rosamond, I have no wonders to relate, and lest you should be disappointed when we meet, I had best tell you now, and at once, all I have to say about myself. My history is much like that of the first years at the Bar of every young lawyer—short and bitter—much law and few fees. Some, however, I have received.

“ A few of my father’s friends, who are so unfortunate as to be at law, have been so good as to direct their attorneys to give me briefs. But most of his friends, to my loss I am too generous, observe, to say *to my sorrow*, are wise enough to keep clear of lawsuits. I heard his friend, the late Chancellor, say the other day to some one who wanted to plunge into a suit in chancery,

“ ‘ If any body were to take a fancy

to a corner of my estate, I would rather,—provided always that nobody knew it,—let him have it, than go to law for it.’——

“ But to go on with my own affairs.

“ A little while after my interview with Lord Oldborough, his Lordship . . . to my surprise—for I thought his offer to ‘assist me in my profession, if ever it should lie in his line,’ was a mere courtier’s promise,—sent his attorney to me, with a brief in a cause of Colonel Hauton’s. The Colonel has gone to law (most ungrateful as he is) with his uncle, who was his guardian, and who managed all his affairs for years.—I need not explain to you the merits of the suit, or the demerits of the plaintiff. It is enough to tell you, that I was so fortunate as to perceive, that the Colonel’s claim was what we call *barred* in law by the statute of limitations—(Let my father rise to explain) I, all-glorious, with the hope of *making a good point* which had

escaped the other counsel employed on our side, went into court with my act in my hand; but when I was beginning to make my point, the senior counsel would not permit me to speak, snatched the book from my hand, stated my objection as his own, never even acknowledged the assistance he had received from me—obtained a nonsuit against the Colonel, and had all the honor and triumph of the day.—Some few gentlemen of the bar, who were near me, knew the truth, and they were indignant.—I hear that my senior, whose name I will never tell you lest you should hate it, has got into great practice by the gaining of this suit. Be that as it may, I would not change places and feelings with him at this moment.

‘ Grant me an honest fame, or grant me none !’

“ Mr. Grose, Lord Oldborough’s solicitor, a rich rogue and very saucy, was obliged to employ me, because his client

ordered it, and Lord Oldborough is not a man to be disobeyed, either in private or public affairs: but the attorney was obviously vexed and scandalized by his Lordship's employing me, a young barrister, of whom nobody had ever heard, and who was not recommended by him, or under the protection even of any solicitor of eminence. Mr. Grose knew well how the suit was gained, but he never mentioned it to Lord Oldborough; on the contrary, he gave all the credit to my *Senior*. This dry story of a *point* at law, is the most interesting thing I have to tell you about myself.—I have seen nothing, heard nothing, know nothing, but of law, and I begin to feel it difficult to write, speak, or think, in any but professional language. Tell my father, that I shall soon come to talking law Latin and law French.

“ I know no more of what is going on in this great metropolis, than if I were at Tobolski. Buckhurst Falconer used to be my newspaper, but since he has

given up all hopes of Caroline, he seldom comes near me. I have lost in him my fashionable Daily Advertiser, my Belle Assemblée, and tête a tête magazine.

“ Last Sunday I went to his fashionable chapel to hear him preach, he is much admired—but I don’t like his manner, or his sermons—too theatrical and affected—too rhetorical and antithetical, evidently more suited to display the talents of the preacher, than to do honor to God or good to man.—He told me, that if he could preach himself into a deanery, he should think he had preached to some purpose ; and could die with a safe conscience, as he should think he had not labored in vain in his vocation.—Of all men, I think a dissipated clergyman is the most contemptible. How much Commissioner Falconer has to answer for, who forced him, or who lured him, knowing how unfit he was for it, into the church!—The Commissioner frets because the price of iniquity has

not yet been received—the living of Chipping-Friars is not yet Buckhurst's.—The poor paralytic incumbent, for whose death he is praying daily, is still living, and, as Buckhurst says, may shake on many a long year.—How Buckhurst lives in the mean time at the rate he does, I cannot tell you—that art of living in style upon nothing is an art, which I see practised by numbers, but which is still a mystery to me.—However, the Falconers seem in great favor at present; the Commissioner hopes Lord Oldborough may do something for Buckhurst.—Last Sunday, when I went to hear him preach, I saw the whole family of the Falconers, in grandeur, in the Duke of Greenwich's seat.—The Marchioness of Twickenham was there, and looked beautiful, but, as I thought, unhappy. After the sermon, I heard Lady Somebody, who was in the next seat to me, whisper to a Lady Otherbody, just as she was rising after the blessing, “My dear Madam, did you

hear the shocking report about the Marchioness of Twickenham?"—Then a very close and confidential whisper.—Then, loud enough for me to hear—"But, I do suppose, as there are hopes of an heir, all will be hushed—for the present."

"Just then the Duke of Greenwich and the Marquis and Marchioness came down the aisle, and as they past, my scandal-mongers smiled, and curtsied, and were so delighted to see their dear Marchioness.—The Miss Falconers, following in the wake of nobility, seemed too much charmed with themselves, to see or know me—till Lord Oldborough, though listening to the Duke, espied me, and did me the honor to bow; then the Misses put up their glasses to see who I could be, and they also smiled, and curtsied, and were delighted to see me.

"It is well for us, that we don't live on their smiles and curtsies.—They went off in the Marchioness of Twickenham's

superb equipage.—I had a full view of her as she drew up the glass, and a more melancholy countenance than hers I have seldom seen.—Lord Oldborough hoped my father was well—but never mentioned Godfrey.—The Marchioness does not know me, but she turned at the name of Percy, and I thought sighed.—Now, Rosamond, I put that sigh in for you—Make what you can of it, and of the half-heard mysterious whisper. I expect that you will have a romance in great forwardness, before Monday, the 3d of next month, when I hope to see you all.

“No letters from Godfrey.—Erasmus desires me to thank my father for his letter, which has completely satisfied his scruples of conscience. He has been so busy of late, he tells me, he has not had time to record for you all his doings.—In one word he is doing exceedingly well. His practice increases every day in the city in spite of Dr. Frumpton. Adieu till

Monday the 3rd—Happy Monday!—
‘Restraint that sweetens liberty.’—My
dear mother, which do you think loves
vacation-time most, a lawyer or a school-
boy?—How few have such homes to go
to as I have!

“I was interrupted just now by a letter
from a certain farmer, of the name of
Grimwood, who has written to me—
‘because I am a friend to justice, and
my father’s son, &c.’ and has given me a
long account of a quarrel he has with
Dr. Leicester, about the tithe of peaches
—said Grimwood is so angry, that he
can neither spell nor write intelligibly,
and he swears that he’ll go to law with
the Doctor, and if it cost him a thousand
guineas in gold, he will have the law of
the Doctor. I wish my father would be
so kind, as to send to Mr. Grimwood,
(he lives at Pegginton) and advise him
to keep clear of Attorney Sharpe, and
to keep cool, if possible, till Monday
the 3rd, and then I will make up the
quarrel if I can.—Observe, more is to be

done on Monday the 3rd, than ever was done on any other Monday.

Your affectionate Son,

ALFRED PERCY."

"P. S.—I open my letter to tell you a delightful piece of news—that Lord Oldborough has taken Temple for his private secretary, and will bring him in for the borough of ——. How his Lordship found him out to be the author of that famous pamphlet, which bore Cunningham's name, I do not know. I know, that I kept the secret, as in honor bound. But Lord Oldborough has the best ways and means of obtaining intelligence of any man in England. It is singular that he never said one word about the pamphlet to Temple, nor ever appeared to him to know that it was his writing.—I cannot understand this."

To comprehend why Lord Oldborough had never mentioned the pamphlet to Mr. Temple, it was necessary to know

more than Alfred had opportunities of discovering of this minister's character. His Lordship did not choose to acknowledge to the world, that he had been duped by Cunningham Falconer. Lord Oldborough would sooner repair an error than acknowledge it. Not that he was uncandid.—But he considered candor as dangerous and impolitic in a public character.

Upon some occasion, soon after Mr. Temple came to be his Lordship's secretary, Mr. Temple acknowledged to a gentleman, in Lord Oldborough's presence, some trifling official mistake he had made; Lord Oldborough, as soon as the gentleman was gone, said to his secretary,

“ Sir, if you make a mistake, repair it—that is sufficient.—Sir, you are young in political life—You don't know, I see, that candor hurts a political character in the opinion of fools—that is, of the greater part of mankind.—Candor may be advantageous—to a moral writer, or to a

private gentleman, but not to a minister of state. A statesman, if he would govern public opinion, must establish a belief in his infallibility."

Upon this principle Lord Oldborough abided, not only by his own measures, but by his own instruments, right or wrong, he was known to support those whom he had once employed or patronised.—Lucky this for the Falconer family!

Letter from Alfred to Erasmus.

"MY DEAR DOCTOR,

"How I pity you who have no vacations.—Please, when next you sum up the advantages and disadvantages of the professions of Law and Medicine, to set down *vacations* to the credit side of the Law.—You who work for life and death can have no pause, no respite; whilst I from time to time may, happily, leave all the property, real and personal, of my fellow creatures, to it's lawful or unlawful owners. Now, for six good weeks

to come, I may hang sorrow and cast away care, and forget the sound and smell of parchments, and the din of the courts.

“ Here I am, a happy prisoner at large, in this nut-shell of a house at the Hills, which you have never seen since it has become the family mansion.—I am now in the actual tenure and occupation of the little room, commonly called Rosamond’s room, bounded on the N—E—W—and S—by blank ——— (N. B. a very dangerous practice of leaving blanks for your boundaries in your leases, as an eminent attorney told me last week). Said room containing in the whole 144 square feet, $4\frac{1}{2}$ square inches, superficial measure, be the same more or less.—I don’t know how my father and mother, and sisters, who all their lives were used to range in spacious apartments, can live so happily, cooped up as they now are; but their bodies, as well as minds, seem to have a contractile power, which adapts them to their pre-

sent confined circumstances. Procrustes, though he was a mighty tyrant, could fit only the body to the bed.—I found all at home as cheerful and contented as in the days when we lived magnificently at Percy-Hall. I have not seen the Hungerfords yet; Colonel H. is, I hear, attached to Lady Elizabeth Pembroke.—I know very little of her, but Caroline assures me she is an amiable, sensible woman, well suited to him, and to all his family.—I need not, however, expatiate on this subject, for Caroline says that she wrote you a long letter, the day after she returned from Hungerford-Castle.—I have a great deal to do since I came home, to explain, and indeed to decipher, the short-hand notes, which you have lately sent instead of decent letters.—I have, however, supplied all your deficiencies, and told the history of Panton's quarrel about the wig—and have given a full account of the green ribbon scene at Lady Spilsbury's.

And now I must tell you what has

happened to me since I came to the country.—Do you remember my receiving a very angry, very ill-spelled letter, from a certain farmer Grimwood of Pegginton, who swore, that if it cost him a thousand guineas in gold, he would have the law of *the Doctor*—viz. Dr. Leicester—about a tithe of peaches.—My father, at my request, was so good as to send for said Grimwood, and to prevent him from having recourse in his ire to Attorney Sharpe.—With prodigious difficulty, the angry farmer was restrained till my arrival; when I came home I found him waiting for me, and literally foaming at the mouth, with the furious desire for law. I flatter myself, I did listen to his story with a patience, which Job might have been admired for. I was well aware that till he had exhausted himself, and was practically convinced that he had nothing more to say, he would be incapable of listening to me, or to the voice of the angel of peace.—When at last, absolute fatigue of reitera-

tion had reduced him to silence, when he had held me by the button, till he was persuaded he had made me fully master of his case, I prevailed upon him to let me hear what could be said on the opposite side of the question.—And after some hours' cross-examination of six witnesses, repeaters, and reporters, and after an infinite confusion of *said I's*, and *said he's*, it was made clearly to appear, that the whole quarrel originated in the mistake of a few words in a message, which Dr. Leicester's proctor had given to his son, a boy of seven years old, who had left it with a deaf gate-keeper of seventy-six, who repeated it to farmer Grimwood, at a moment when the farmer was overheated and overtired, and consequently prone to *misunderstanding* and to anger.—The most curious circumstance in the whole business is that the word *peaches* had never been mentioned by Dr. Leicester's proctor in the original message; and Dr. Leicester really did not know, that Mr. Grimwood of Pegginton

was possessed of a single peach. Grimwood, though uncommonly obstinate and slow, is a just man; and when I at last brought the facts with indisputable evidence home to his understanding, he acknowledged that he had been too hasty, rejoiced that he had not gone to law, begged the Doctor and the Doctor's proctor's pardon, thanked me with his whole honest heart, and went home in perfect charity with all mankind.—Mr. Sharpe, who soon heard of the amicable conclusion of this affair, laughs at me, and pronounces that I shall never make a lawyer, and that my friends need never flatter themselves with the notion of my rising at the bar.—But . . . Caroline and Rosamond, at this instant, have appeared at each of my elbows, and summon me out to walk with them.

—Yours truly,

A. PERCY."

"My letter was forgotten yesterday and I am glad of it. Blessings on Far-

mer Grimwood of Pegginton ; little did I think, that he and his quarrel about tithe peaches, would have such happy influence on my destiny. Blessings on farmer Grimwood of Pegginton, I repeat ; he has been the cause of my seeing such a woman !—of my receiving such a look of approbation, such a smile !—She is niece to our good rector—come to spend a few days with him. —Grimwood went to the vicarage to make up his quarrel with Dr. Leicester—I do not know what he said of me, but I find it has left a very favorable impression in the good Doctor's mind. —He came here yesterday, and brought with him his charming niece.—My dear Erasmus, you know that I have often prayed that I might never fall in love, *seriously*, till I had some reasonable prospect of being able to marry—but I begin to retract my prayer for indifference, and to be of opinion, that the most prudent thing a professional man can do is to fall in love—to fall in love

with such a woman as Sophia Leicester.—What a new motive for exertion!—Animated by, delightful hope, perseverance, even in the most stupid drudgery, will be pleasure.—Hope!—but I am far from hope—far at this instant from knowing distinctly what I hope—or wish—or mean.—I will write again soon and explain.”

CHAPTER XX.

IN several successive letters of Alfred's to his brother, the progress of his attachment to Miss Leicester is described. Instead of paying a visit of a few days to her uncle, it appears that she stays at the vicarage during the whole of Alfred's vacation. Her mother dies, and, contrary to the expectations of some of her admirers, Miss Leicester is left in possession of only a moderate fortune.—She shows **much** dignity under these adverse circumstances, with a charming mixture of spirit and gentleness of disposition. The change in her expectations, which deprived her of some of her fashionable admirers, showed her the superior sincerity and steadiness of Alfred's sentiments.—No promises are given on either side; but it appears, that Alfred is permitted

to live and labor upon hope. He returns to London more eager than ever to pursue his profession.

We trust that our readers will be fully satisfied with this abridgment of the affair, and will be more inclined to sympathize with Alfred, and to wish well to his attachment, than if they had been fatigued with a volume of his love-letters, and with those endless repetitions of the same sentiments with which most lovers' letters abound.

Let us now go on to the affairs of Erasmus Percy, explain the cause of old Panton's quarrel with him, and give an account of what Alfred called *the green ribbon scene* at Lady Spilsbury's.—

Mr. Panton, provoked by his daughter's coldness towards Lord Roadster, had begun shrewdly to suspect, that the lady must be in love with some other person. His young physician was the only man, on whom he could fix his suspicions. Constance seemed to be on a more confidential footing with him than

with any of the visitors who frequented his house ; she had spoken of him in terms of high approbation, and had not contradicted her father when he had, purposely to try her, pronounced Dr. Percy to be the handsomest young fellow he knew.—While these suspicions were secretly gaining strength in the father's mind, a circumstance occurred, which confirmed them at once, and caused them to burst forth with uncontrolled violence of expression.

Dr. Percy was called in to prescribe for a sick lawyer, and from this lawyer's conversation he learnt, that Lord Runnymede was a ruined man, and that his son Lord Roadster's extravagance had been the cause of his ruin. Erasmus determined to put Mr. Panton upon his guard, and thus, if possible, to prevent the amiable Constance from becoming a victim to her father's absurd ambition. With this view he went to Mr. Panton's. The old gentleman was gone to dine with his club. Mrs. Panton, in her elegant

language, desired he would leave his business with her. When he had explained the purport of his visit, after a variety of vulgar exclamations denoting surprise and horror, and after paying many compliments to her own sagacity, all which appeared incompatible with her astonishment, Mrs. Panton expressed much gratitude to Erasmus, mixed with suppressed satisfaction and significant nods, which he could not quite comprehend. Her gratitude was interrupted, and the whole train of her ideas changed, by the entrance of a milliner with new caps and artificial flowers. She, however, retained sufficient recollection of what had passed to call after Erasmus when he had taken his leave, and to insist upon his coming to her party that evening. This he declined. Then she said he *must* dine with her next day, for "let him be never so busy, he must dine somewhere, and as good dine with somebody as with nobody—in short, she would take no denial." The next day

Erasmus was received with ungracious oddity of manner by old Panton—the only person in the drawing-room when he arrived. Erasmus was so much struck with the gloom of his countenance, that he asked whether Mr. Panton felt himself ill.—Panton bared his wrist, and held out his hand to Erasmus to feel his pulse—then withdrawing his hand, he exclaimed—“Nonsense! I’m as well as any man in England.—Pray, now, Doctor Percy, why don’t you get a wig?”—“Why should I, Sir, when I have hair?” said Erasmus, laughing. — “Pshaw! Doctor, what signifies laughing when I am serious!—Why, Sir, in my youth every decent physician wore a wig, and I have no notion of a good physician without a wig—particularly a young one.—Sir, many people have a great objection to a young physician for many reasons.—And take my advice in time, Doctor Percy—a wig, a proper wig, not one of your modern natural scratches, but a decent powdered Doctor’s bob,

would make you look ten years older at one slap, and trust me, you'd get into practice fast enough then, and be sent for by many a sober family, that would never think of letting you within their doors without the wig—for, Sir, you are too young and too handsome for a physician—Hey—what say you to the wig?" concluded Panton, in a tone of such serious, yet comical impatience, that Erasmus found it difficult to restrain a smile, whilst he answered "that he really did not think his charms were so dangerous, that it was necessary to disguise them by a wig; that as to his youth, it was an objection which every day would tend to lessen, and that he trusted he might obtain the credit of being a good physician, if he could cure people of their diseases, and they would feel it to be a matter of indifference whether they were restored to health by a Doctor in a wig, or without one."

"Indifference!" cried Panton, start-

ing upright in his chair with passion.—
“ I don’t know what you call a matter of indifference—Sir, I can tell you it’s no matter of indifference to me, if you mean me, for say, that with God’s mercy you carried me through, what then, if you are doing your best to break my heart after all——.”

Mr. Panton stopped short, for, at this instant, Constance came into the room, and her father’s look of angry suspicion, and her blush, immediately explained to Erasmus what had the moment before appeared to him unintelligible.—He felt provoked with himself for coloring in his turn, and feeling embarrassed without any reason, but he recovered his presence of mind directly, when Constance, with a dignified ingenuous modesty of manner, advanced towards him, notwithstanding her father’s forbidding look, and with a sweet, yet firm voice, thanked him for his yesterday’s friendly visit to her mother.

—“ I wonder you a’nt ashamed of yourself, girl !”—cried old Panton, choking with passion.

“ And I’m sure I wonder you a’nt ashamed of yourself, Mr. Panton, if you come to that,” cried Mrs. Panton, “ exposing of your family affairs this way, by your unseasonable passions, when one has asked people to dinner too.”

“ Dinner, or no dinner !” cried old Panton, and he must have been strangely transported beyond himself when he made that exclamation.—“ Dinner, or no dinner ! Mrs. Panton, I will speak my mind; and be master in my own house ; so, Doctor Percy, if you please, we’ll leave the ladies, and talk over our matters our own way, in my own room here within.”

Dr. Percy willingly acceded to this proposal.—Old Panton waddled as fast as he could to show the way through the antichamber, whilst Mrs. Panton called after him, “ Don’t expose yourself no more than you can help, my

dear.”—And as Erasmus bowed to her in passing, she whispered, “Never mind him, Doctor—stand by yourself—I’ll stand by you, and *we*’ll stand by you—won’t we, Constance?—see her color!”—“We have reason to be grateful to Doctor Percy,” said Constance, gravely, with an air of offended modesty, “and I hope, added she, with softened sweetness of tone, as she looked at him, and saw his feelings in his countenance, “I hope Doctor Percy is assured of my gratitude, and of my perfect esteem.”—

“Come! . . . what the devil?”—cried Old Panton, “I thought you were close behind me.”

“Now, Doctor,” cried he, as soon as he had fairly got Erasmus into his closet, and shut the door—“Now, Doctor, I suppose you see I’m not a man to be imposed upon.”

“Nor, if you were, am I a man to impose upon you, Sir?” said Erasmus. —“If I understand you rightly, Mr.

Panton, you suspect me of some designs upon your daughter—I have none.”

“And you won’t have the assurance to deny, that you are in love with her?”

“I am not in love with Miss Panton, Sir; she has charms and virtues, which might create the strongest attachment in the heart of any man of feeling and discernment, who could permit himself to think of her. But I am not in a situation in which I could, with honor, seek to win her affections, and, fortunately for me, this reflection has probably preserved my heart from danger.—If I felt any thing like love for your daughter, Sir, you may be assured that I should not, at this instant, be in your house.”

“A mighty fine speech, Sir! and well delivered for aught I know.—You are a scholar, and can speak sentences, but that won’t impose on me, a plain man that has eyes.—Why . . . tell me! . . . Didn’t I see you within these two minutes blushing up to the eyes, both of you, at one another——Don’t I know

when I see men and women in love . . . tell me ! Mrs. Panton—fudge!—And did not I see behind my back just now, the women conjuring with you ? — And aren't you coloring over head and ears with conscience this very instant ?—Tell me !"—

Erasmus in vain asserted his own and the young lady's innocence, and maintained, that blushing was no proof of guilt—he even adverted to the possibility of a man's blushing for others instead of himself.

"Blush for me as much as you please, if it's me you allude to," cried the coarse father.—"But when my daughter's at stake, I make no bones of speaking plain, and cutting the matter short in the beginning—for we all know what love is when it comes to a head.—Marrow-bones ! don't I know that there must be some reason why that headstrong girl won't think of my Lord Runnymede's son and heir, and such a looking youth, title and all, as my Lord

Roadster! And you are the cause, Sir, and I thank you for opening my eyes to it, as you did by your information to Mrs. Panton yesterday, in my absence."

Erasmus protested with such an air of truth, as would have convinced any person capable of being convinced, that, in giving that information, he had been actuated solely by a desire to save Miss Panton from a ruinous match, by honest regard for her and all her family.

"Ruinous!—You are wrong, Sir—I know better—I know best—I saw my Lord Runnymede himself this very morning—a little temporary want of cash, only from the estate's being tied up, as they sometimes tie estates, which all noble families is subject to—Tell me! don't I know the bottom of these things, for though I haven't been used to land, I know all about it.—And at worst, my Lord Roadster, my son in law that is to be, is not chargeable with a penny of his father's debts.—So your informer is wrong, Sir, every way, and no lawyer,

Sir, for I have an attorney at my back—and your information's all wrong, and you had no need to interfere.”

Erasmus felt, and acknowledged the imprudence of his interference, but hoped it might be forgiven in favor of the motive—and he looked so honestly glad to hear that his information was all wrong, that old Panton at the moment believed in his integrity, and said, stretching out his hand towards him—“ Well, well, no harm done—then it's all as it should be, and we may ring for dinner——. But”—recurring again to his favorite idea—“ You'll get the wig, Doctor?”

“ Excuse me,” said Erasmus, laughing. “ Your confidence in me cannot depend upon a wig.”

“ It can, Sir, and it does,” cried Panton, turning again, with all his anger revived.—“ Excuse you! no, Sir, I won't, for the wig's my test, and I told Mrs. Panton so last night—the wig's my test of your uprightness in this matter, Sir; and I fairly tell you, that if you refuse

this, all the words you can string don't signify a button with me."

"And by what right, Sir, do you speak to me in this manner,"—cried Erasmus, proudly, for he lost all sense of the ludicrous in indignation, at the insolent doubt of his integrity, which, after all the assurances he had given, these last words from Mr. Panton, implied—"By what right, Sir, do you speak to me in this manner?—And what reason can you have to expect that I should submit to any tests to convince you of the truth of my assertions."

"Right!—Reason!"—cried Panton. "Why, Doctor, don't you know that I'm your patron!"

"My patron!"—repeated Erasmus, in a tone which would have expressed much to the mind of any man of sense or feeling, but which conveyed no idea to the gross apprehension of old Panton, except that Dr. Percy was ignorant of the fact.

"Your patron—yes, Doctor,—why,

don't you know that ever since you set me upon my legs, I have been going up and down the city puffing . . . that is, I mean, recommending you to all my friends, and you see you're of consequence, getting into fine practice for so young a man.—And it stands to reason, that when one takes a young man by the hand, one has a right to expect one's advice should be followed, and as to the wig, I don't make it a test, you've an objection to a test, but, as I've mentioned it to Mrs. Panton, I must make it a point, and you know I'm not a man to go back.—And you'll consider, that if you disoblige me, you can't expect that I should continue my friendship, and protection, and patronage, and all that."

"Be assured, Sir, I expect nothing from you," said Erasmus, "and desire nothing; I have the happiness and honor to belong to a profession, in which, if a man does not merit confidence, no patronage can long be of use to him, and in which, if he does deserve it, he

will succeed, without requiring any man's patronage."——Much less the patronage of such a one as you!—Erasmus would have said, but that he commanded his indignation, or, perhaps, it was extinguished by contempt.

A servant now came to announce that dinner was waiting. In very bad humor Mr. Panton, nevertheless, eat an excellent dinner, growling over every thing as he devoured it.——Constance seemed much grieved by her father's unseasonable fit of rudeness and obstinacy; with sweetness of temper and filial duty she bore with his humor, and concealed it as far as she could from observation. Mrs. Panton was displeased with this, and once went so far, as to whisper to Erasmus, "that her step-daughter wanted spirit sadly, but that he ought never to mind that, but to take a broad hint, and keep his ground."——Constance blushed scarlet at these hints of Mrs. Panton, from which she evidently suffered more, than from her father's preposterous ill

humor. Erasmus, who with great simplicity, and an upright character, had quick observation and tact, perceived pretty nearly what was going on in the family. He saw that the step-mother, under an air of frank and coarse good nature, was cunning and interested; that she wished to encourage the daughter to open war with the father; knowing that nothing could incense him so much as Constance's thinking of a poor physician, instead of accepting of an Earl's son; Mrs. Panton wished then to fan to a flame the spark, which she was confident existed in his daughter's heart. Erasmus, who was not apt to fancy that ladies liked him, endeavored to relieve Constance from the agonizing apprehension, which he saw she felt of his being misled by her mother's hints, he appeared sometimes not to hear, and at other times not to understand, what Mrs. Panton said; and at last talked so loud across the table to Mr. Henry, about letters from Godfrey, and the officers of all the

regiments in or out of England, that no other subject could be introduced, and no other voice could be heard.—As soon as he decently could, after dinner, Dr. Percy took his leave, heartily glad to escape from his awkward situation, and from the patronage of Mr. Panton.—Erasmus was mistaken, however, in supposing that Mr. Panton could do him no harm.—It is true that he could not deny, that Dr. Percy had restored him to health, and the opinion, which had spread in the city, of Dr. Percy's skill, was not, and could not, be diminished by Mr. Panton's railing against him; but when he hinted that the young physician had practised upon his daughter's heart, all the rich citizens, who had daughters to watch, began to consider him as a dangerous person, and resolved never to call him in, except in some desperate case. Mrs. Panton's gossiping confidences did more harm than her husband's loud complaints; and the very eagerness which poor Constance showed

to vindicate Dr. Percy, and to declare the truth, served only to confirm the sagaciously nodding mothers and over-wise fathers in their own opinions.—Mr. Henry said and did what he could for Erasmus, but what could be done by a young man shut up all day in a counting-house? or who would listen to any thing that was said by a young man without station or name? Mr. Gresham unluckily was at this time at his country seat.—Poor Erasmus found his practice in the city decline as rapidly as it had risen, and he began a little to doubt the truth of that noble sentiment, which he had so proudly expressed. He was comforted, however, by letters from his father; who strongly approved his conduct, and who maintained, that truth would at last prevail; and that the prejudice which had been raised against him would, in time, be turned to his advantage.

It happened that, while old Panton, in his present ludicrous fit of obstinacy,

was caballing against our young physician with all his might in the city, the remote consequences of one of his previous fits of equally absurd positive obstinacy were operating in Dr. Percy's favor at the west end of the town. Our readers may recollect having heard of a footman, whom Mr. Panton turned away for refusing to swallow the dregs of various phials of physic. Erasmus had at the time pleaded in the poor fellow's favor, and had, afterwards, when the servant was out of place, in distress, and ill, humanely attended him, and cured a child of his, who had inflamed eyes.—This man was now in the service of a rich and very fine lady, who lived in Grosvenor Square—Lady Spilsbury.—Her Ladyship had several sickly children—children rendered sickly by their mother's overweening and injudicious care. Alarmed successively by every fashionable medical terror of the day, she dosed her children with every specific which was publicly advertised, or

privately recommended. No creatures of their age had taken such quantities of Ching's lozenges, Godbold's elixir, or Dixon's antibilious pills. The consequence was, that the dangers, which had at first been imaginary, became real; these little victims of domestic medicine never had a day's health; they looked, and were, more dead than alive. Still the mother, in the midst of hourly alarms, was in admiration of her own medical skill, which she said had actually preserved, in spite of nature, children of such sickly constitutions. In consequence of this conviction, she redoubled her vigilance, and the most trivial accident was magnified into a symptom of the greatest importance.

It happened on the day when the eldest Miss Spilsbury had miraculously attained her seventh year, a slight inflammation was discerned in her right eye, which was attributed by her mother to her having neglected the preceding day, to bathe it in elder-flower water;

by her governess, to her having sat up the preceding night to supper; by her maid, to her “having been found peeping through a windy key-hole;” and by the young lady herself, to her “having been kept poring for two hours over her French lesson.”

Whatever might have been the original cause, the inflammation evidently increased, either in consequence, or in spite of the innumerable remedies applied internally and externally.—In vain the apothecary cleared the passages, in vain mercurial ointment, and blistering, and leeches, took their course—the eye grew redder and redder, and as red as blood, the nose inflamed, and the mother, in great alarm for the beauty, as well as health of her child, sent for Sir Amyas Courtney. He had already won Lady Spilbury’s heart, by recommending to her the *honan tcha*, or Tartar tea; which enables the Tartars to digest raw flesh, and tinges water of a red color.

Sir Amyas pronounced, that the young

lady had hereditary nerves, besought Lady Spilsbury to compose herself, assured her the inflammation was purely symptomatic, and as soon as he could subdue the continual nervous inclination to shrivel up the nose, which he trusted he could in time master, all would go well.—But Sir Amyas attended every day for a month, yet never got the mastery of this nervous inclination.—Lady Spilsbury then was persuaded *it could not be nerves, it must be scrofula*, and she called in Dr. Frumpton, *the man for scrofula*.—He of course confirmed her Ladyship in her opinion; for a week d——d nerves and Sir Amyas; threw in desperate doses of calomel for another month, reduced the poor child to what the maid called an *attomy*, and still the inflammation increased.—Lady Spilsbury desired a consultation of physicians, but Dr. Frumpton would not consult with Sir Amyas, nor would Sir Amyas consult with Doctor Frumpton.—Lady Spilsbury began to dread, that the sight

of the eye would be injured, and this idea terrified the mother almost out of her senses. In the suspension of authority, which terror produces in a family, the lady's maid usually usurps considerable power.

Now, her Ladyship's maid had been offended by Dr. Frumpton's calling her *my good girl*, and by Sir Amyas Courtney's having objected to a green silk bandage, which she had recommended; so that she could not *abide* either of the gentlemen, and she was confident the young lady would never get well, while they had the management of affairs; she had heard—but she did not mention from whom, she was too diplomatic to give up her authority,—she had heard of a young physician, a Dr. Percy, who had performed wonderful great cures in the city, and had in particular cured a young *lady*, who had an inflamed eye, just for all the world like Miss Spilsbury's—In this last assertion there was, perhaps, some little exaggeration; but it produced a salu-

tary effect upon Lady Spilsbury's imagination ; the footman was immediately dispatched for Dr. Percy, and ordered to make all possible haste. Thus, by one of those petty under plots of life, which, often unknown to us, are continually going on, our young physician was brought into a situation, where he had an opportunity of showing his abilities. These favorable accidents happen to many men, who are not able to make use of them, and thus the general complaint is preferred of want of good fortune, or of opportunity for talents to distinguish themselves.

Upon Dr. Percy's arrival at Lady Spilsbury's, he immediately perceived, that parties ran high, and that the partisans were all eager to know, whether he would pronounce the young lady's case to be nervous or scrofulous. He was assailed by a multitude of female voices, and requested particularly to attend to innumerable contradictory symptoms, before he was permitted even to see

his patient. He attended carefully to whatever facts he could obtain, pure from opinion and misrepresentation. The young lady was in a darkened room, he begged to have a little more light admitted, though she was in such pain, that she could scarcely endure it. Our young physician had the great advantage of possessing the use of his senses and understanding, unbiassed by medical theories, or by the authority of great names: he was not always trying to force symptoms to agree with previous descriptions, but he was actually able to see, hear, and judge of them, as they really appeared. There was a small protuberance on the left side of the nose, which, on his pressing it, gave great pain to the child.

“ Dear me ! Miss, you know,” said the maid, “ it is not in your nose you feel the great pain You know you told Sir Amyas Courtney t’other day that is, Sir Amyas Courtney told you”

Dr. Percy insisted, that the child should be permitted to speak for herself; and, relieved from the apprehension of not saying the thing that she was expected to say, she described her present and past feelings.—She said, “that the pain seemed lately to have *changed from where it was before*—that it had changed ever since Dr. Frumpton’s opening his snuff-box near her had made her sneeze.” This sneeze was thought by all but Dr. Percy, to be a circumstance too trivial to be worth mentioning. But on this hint he determined to repeat the experiment. He had often thought, that many of the pains, which are supposed to be symptoms of certain diseases, many disorders, which baffle the skill of medicine, originate in accidents, by which extraneous substances are taken or forced into different parts of the body.—He ordered some cephalic snuff to be administered to the patient.—All present looked with contempt at the physician, who proposed such a simple remedy.—But soon after the

child had sneezed violently and repeatedly, Dr. Percy saw a little bit of green silk appear, which was drawn from the nostril, to the patient's great and immediate relief—her brothers and sisters then recollected having seen her, two months before, stuffing up her nose a bit of green ribbon, which she said she liked, because it smelt of some perfume.—The cause of the inflammation removed, it soon subsided, the eye and nose recovered their natural size and color; and every body said, “who would have thought it?” All but Dr. Frumpton, and Sir Amyas Courtney, who, in the face of demonstration, maintained each his own opinion; declaring, that the green ribbon had nothing to do with the business. The sudden recovery of the child, Sir Amyas said, proved to him in the most satisfactory manner, that the disease was, as he at first pronounced—nervous—Dr. Frumpton swore, that scrofula would soon break out again in another shape; and, denouncing vengeance against

generations yet unborn, he left Lady Spilsbury's children to take the consequence of trusting to a youngster, whom he had turned by the shoulders out of his hospital, for his impertinent interference.

—In spite of all that the two angry and unsuccessful physicians could say, the recovery of the child's eye redounded much to Dr. Percy's honor, and introduced him to the notice of several men of science and celebrity, who frequented Lady Spilsbury's excellent dinners.—Even the intemperance of Dr. Frumpton's anger was of service, for in consequence of his assertion, that Dr. Percy had been turned out of the Hospital, inquiry was made into the circumstances, and the friends of Erasmus had then an opportunity of producing in his defence the Irish porter. His cause could not be in better hands.

With that warmth and eloquence of gratitude, characteristic of his country, the poor fellow told his story so as to touch every heart. Among others it

particularly affected an officer, just returned from our armies on the continent. And by him it was the next day repeated at the table of a celebrated General, when the conversation turned upon the conduct of certain army surgeons. Lord Oldborough happened to be one of the company; the name of Percy struck his ear; he had forgotten, that such a person as Dr. Percy existed; but the moment Erasmus was thus brought to his recollection, he attended particularly to what the officer was saying, and after hearing two circumstances, which were so marked with humanity and good sense, his Lordship determined to give what assistance he could to the rising credit of the son of his old friend, by calling him in for Lady Oldborough, who was in a declining state of health.—But Sir Amyas Courtney, who had long attended her Ladyship, endeavoured with all the address of hatred, to prejudice her against his young rival, and to prevent her complying with her Lord's request. De-

pending on her habitual belief, that he was essential to her existence, Sir Amyas went so far as to declare, that, if Dr. Percy should be sent for, he must discontinue his visits. Lord Oldborough, however, whom the appearance of opposition to his will always confirmed in his purpose, cut short the matter by a few peremptory words.

Sir Amyas, the soft silken Sir Amyas, could not for an instant stand before the terror of Lord Oldborough's eye—the moment he was told that he was at perfect liberty to discontinue his visits—“his regard his attachment his devotion for Lady Oldborough, prevented the possibility of abandoning her Ladyship, he was willing to sacrifice his private feelings, perhaps, his private prejudices, his judgment, in short any thing, every thing, sooner than disoblige Lord Oldborough, or any of his family.”—Lord Oldborough satisfied, with the submission, scarcely staid to hear the end of the speech, but rang the bell,

ordered that Dr. Percy should be sent for, and went to attend a cabinet council.

Lady Oldborough received him as it might be supposed that a very sickly, very much prejudiced, very proud lady of quality, would receive a physician without a name, who was forced upon her in opposition to her long habits of reliance on her courtly favorite. Her present disease, as Dr. Percy believed, was water upon her chest, and there was some chance of saving her, by the remedies which have been found successful in a first attack of that complaint; but Sir Amyas had pronounced, that her Ladyship's disorder was merely nervous spasms, consequent upon a bilious attack, and he could not, or would not, recede from his opinion; his prescriptions, to which her Ladyship devoutly adhered to the last, were all directed against bile and nerves. She would not hear of water on the chest, or take any of the remedies proposed by Dr. Percy. Lady Oldbo-

rough died ten days after he was called in.—Those who knew nothing of the matter, that is, above nine tenths of all who talked about it, affirmed, that poor Lady Oldborough's death was occasioned by her following the rash prescriptions of a young physician, who had been forced upon her by Lord Oldborough, and who, unacquainted with her Ladyship's constitution, had mistaken the nature of her complaint. All her Ladyship's female relations joined in this clamor, for they were most of them friends or partisans of Sir Amyas Courtney. The rank and conspicuous situation of Lord Oldborough interested vast numbers in the discussion, which was carried on in every fashionable circle the day after her Ladyship's decease.

Dr. Percy took a decided step in this emergency. He went to the minister, to whom no one, friend or enemy, had ventured to give the slightest hint of the reports in circulation. Dr. Percy plainly stated the facts, represented, that his

character and the fate of his whole life were at stake, and besought his Lordship to have the truth examined into, by eminent and impartial physicians.—Erasmus was aware of all he hazarded in making this request—aware that he must hurt Lord Oldborough's feelings—that he must irritate him by bringing to his view at once, and in this critical moment, a number of family cabals, of which he was ignorant—aware that Lord Oldborough was oppressed with business, public and private; and that, above all things, he was impatient of any intrusion upon his hours of privacy.—But all these subordinate considerations vanished before Lord Oldborough's magnanimity. Without saying one word, he sat down and wrote an order, that proper means should be taken, to ascertain the disease of which Lady Oldborough died.

The report made, in consequence of this order, by the surgeons, confirmed Dr. Percy's opinion, that her Ladyship's disease was water on the chest—and

Lord Oldborough took effectual means to give the truth publicity.

“ You need not thank me, Dr. Percy—You have a right to expect justice, more you will never want. My assistance might, it seems, have been injurious, but can never be necessary to your reputation.”

These few words—much from Lord Oldborough—and which he took care to say when they could be heard by numbers, were quickly circulated.—The physicians and surgeons, who had given in their report, were zealous in maintaining the truth; medical and political parties were interested in the affair, the name of Dr. Percy was joined with the first names in the medical world, and repeated by the first people in the great world, so that with surprising celerity he became known and fashionable.—And thus the very circumstance, that threatened his ruin, was by his civil courage and decided judgment converted into the means of his rising into eminence.

Late one night, after a busy and fatiguing day, just as Erasmus had got into bed, and was settling himself comfortably to sleep, he heard a loud knock at the door.

“ Mr. Henry, Sir, from Mr. Panton’s in the city, wishes to speak with you.”

“ Show him in.—So Old Panton I suppose Some indigestion has brought him to reason ?”—

“ Oh no such thing,” interrupted Mr. Henry, “ I would not have disturbed you at this time of night for any such trifle, but our excellent friend Mr. Gresham”

“ What of him ?” cried Erasmus, starting up in bed.

“ Is ill—but whether dangerously or not I cannot tell you. An express from his house in the country has just arrived ; I heard the letter read, but could not get it to bring to you.—It was written to Old Panton from Mr. Gresham’s house-keeper, without her master’s know-

ledge, as he has no opinion of physicians, she said, except of a young Dr. Percy, and did not like to send for him for such a trifle as a sore throat, lest it should hurt his practice to leave town at this season.

Erasmus staid to hear no more, but ordered horses instantly, set out, and travelled with all possible expedition. He had reason to rejoice that he had not made a moment's delay.—He found Mr. Gresham actually suffocating from a quinsey—A surgeon had been sent for from the next town, but was not at home. Erasmus, the instant he saw Mr. Gresham, perceiving the danger, without saying one syllable, sprang to the bed, lanced the throat, and saved the life of his valuable friend.—The surgeon, who came the next day, said that “Dr. Percy ought to have waited for his arrival, and that a physician might be severely blamed for performing a surgical operation that it was a very indelicate thing.”

But Mr. Gresham, who had fallen into a comfortable sleep, did not hear him ; nor did Dr. Percy, who was writing the following letter to his father :

* * * * *

* * * * * “ You will sympathize with me, my dear father, and all my friends at home will sympathize in the joy I feel at seeing this excellent man, this kind friend, recovering under my care. These are some of the happy moments which, in my profession, repay us for years of toil, disappointment, and sufferings—Yes, sufferings—for we must suffer with those that suffer—We must daily and hourly behold every form of pain, acute or lingering : numbers, every year of our lives, we must see perish, the victims of incurable disease. We are doomed to hear the groans of the dying, and the lamentations, sometimes the reproaches, of surviving friends ; often and often must the candid and humane physician deplore the insufficiency of his

art. But there are successful, gloriously successful moments, which reward us for all the painful duties, all the unavailing regrets of our profession.

This day—I shall recal to my mind, whenever my spirits sink, or whenever my fortitude begins to fail—I wish you could see the gratitude and joy in the looks of all Mr. Gresham's servants—He is much beloved and esteemed—His death would have been a public loss, for the beneficent use he makes of his princely fortune has rendered numbers dependent on him for the comforts of life.—He lives here in a palace, and every thing he has done, whether in building or planting, in encouraging the useful or the fine arts, has been done with a judicious and magnificent spirit;—Surely this man ought to be happy in his own reflections, and yet he does not seem to me as happy as he deserves to be.—I shall stay here till I see him out of all danger of relapse—He has just awakened—Adieu—for the present.”

In continuation of this letter, the following was written the next day.—

“All danger is over—my friend is convalescent, and I shall return to town to morrow—But would you think, my dear father, that the real cause of Mr. Gresham’s being unhappy—is Patronage—By accident I made use of that word in speaking of Old Panton’s quarrel with me, and he cursed the word the moment I pronounced it——“Yes!” he exclaimed, “It is twice accursed, once in the giving, and once in the receiving.”—Then he began, in a most feeling manner, to describe the evils attendant upon being a patron—He has done his utmost to relieve and encourage genius in distress; but among all the poets, painters, artists, and men of letters, whom, in various ways, he has obliged, he has scarcely been able to satisfy the vanity or the expectations of any.—Some have passed from excessive adulation to gross abuse of him—many more torment him continually with their com-

plaints and invectives against each other; and, instead of having done good by his generosity, he finds that in a variety of instances, of which he detailed the circumstances, he has done much mischief, and, as he says, infinite injury to his own peace of mind—for he has burdened himself with the care of a number of people, who cannot be made happy.—He has to deal with men but partially cultivated; with *talents*, unaccompanied by reason, justice, or liberality of sentiment.—With great feeling himself, he suffers acutely from all their jealousies and quarrels, and from the near and perpetual view of the *littlenesses* by which artists too often degrade themselves.—Another man in Mr. Gresham's situation would become a misanthropist, and would comfort himself by railing against the ingratitude of mankind, but this would not comfort Mr. Gresham.—He loves his fellow-creatures, and sees their faults in sorrow rather than in anger.—I have known him, and intimately

for a considerable time, and yet I never heard him speak on this subject but once before, when the painter, whom I used to call the irritable genius, had caricatured him in return for all his kindness.

“ Though it is not easy to change the habits, or to alter the views and objects of a man like Mr. Gresham, past the meridian of life, yet I cannot help flattering myself, that this might be effected. If he would, by one bold effort, shake off these dependants, the evening of his days might yet be serene and happy. He wants friends, not *protégées*. —I have advised him, as soon as his strength will permit, to take a little tour, which will bring him into your part of the country. He wishes much to become acquainted with all our family, and I have given him a note of introduction. You, my dear father, can say to him more than I could with propriety.

“ Mr. Gresham knows how to accept

as well as to give.—He allows me to have the pleasure of proving to him, that, where my friends are concerned, I am above pecuniary considerations.—My love to dear mother, Rosamond, and Caroline.

Your affectionate son,

E. PERCY."

Though Mr. Gresham would not hurt the feelings of his young friend and physician, by pressing upon him at the moment any remuneration, or by entering into any calculation of the loss he would sustain by his absence from London at this critical season, he took his own methods of justly recompensing Dr. Percy.—Erasmus found at his door, the day after his return to town, a plain, but excellent chariot and horses, with a note from Mr. Gresham, written in such terms as precluded the possibility of refusing the offer.

The celebrated London physician, who said that he was not paid for three weeks'

attendance in the country, by a draught for two thousand pounds, and who, when the pen was put into his own hands, wrote four in the place of two; would smile in scorn, at the generosity of Mr. Gresham, and the disinterestedness of Dr. Percy.

CHAPTER XXI.

Letter from Caroline to Erasmus.

“ MY DEAR ERASMUS,

YOUR friend and patient, Mr. Gresham, was so eager to take your advice, and so quick in his movements, that your letter, announcing his intended visit, reached us but a few days before his arrival at the Hills.—And . . . Mark how great and little events, which seem to have no possible link of connexion, depend upon one another—Alfred or Mr. Gresham must have sat up all night, or slept on the floor, had not Alfred, that morning, received a letter from Mrs. Hungerford, summoning him to town to draw her son's marriage settlements—It is thought that Col. Hungerford, whose leave of absence from his

regiment has, by special favor, been repeatedly removed, will be very soon sent abroad.—Lady Elizabeth Pembroke has, therefore, consented to his urgent desire for their immediate union ; and Alfred will, I am sure, give them as little reason as possible to complain of the law's delay. Lady Elizabeth, who has all that decision of mind and true courage, which you know is so completely compatible with the most perfect gentleness of disposition and softness, even timidity of manners, resolves to leave all her relations and friends, and to go abroad. She says, she knew what sacrifices she must make in marrying a soldier, and she is prepared to make them without hesitation or repining.

“ And now to return to your friend, Mr. Gresham—The more we see of him the more we like him. Perhaps he bribed our judgment a little at first by the kind, affectionate manner in which he spoke of you ; but, independently of this prepossession, we should, I hope, soon

have discovered his merit. He is a good English merchant. Not a '*M. Friport, qui sçait donner, mais qui ne sçait pas vivre,*' but a well-bred, well-informed gentleman, upright, liberal, and benevolent, without singularity or oddities of any sort. His quiet, plain manners, free from ostentation, express so well the kind feelings of his mind, that I prefer them infinitely to what are called polished manners. Last night Rosamond and I were amusing ourselves by contrasting him with our recollection of the polished M. de Tourville—but as you were not at home at the memorable time of the shipwreck, and of M. de Tourville's visit, you cannot feel the force of our parallel between these two beings, the most dissimilar I have ever seen—an English merchant and a diplomatic Frenchman.—You will ask, what put it into our heads to make the comparison? A slight circumstance, which happened yesterday evening.—Rosamond was showing Mr. Gresham some of my draw-

ings, and among them the copy of that beautiful miniature in M. de Tourville's snuff-box—My father told him the history of Euphrosyne, of her German prince, and Count Albert. — Mr. Gresham's way of listening struck us, by it's contrast to the manner of M. de Tourville—and this led us on to draw a parallel between their characters. — Mr. Gresham, instead of shrugging his shoulders, and smiling disdainfully—like the Frenchman, at the quixotism of the young nobleman, who lost his favor at court by opposing the passion of his prince, was touched with Count Albert's disinterested character, and quite forgetting, as Rosamond observed, to compliment me upon my picture of Euphrosyne, he laid down the miniature with a negligence, of which M. de Tourville never would have been guilty, and went on eagerly to tell some excellent traits of the Count—For instance, when he was a very young man in the Prussian or Austrian service, I forget which,

in the heat of an engagement he had his sabre lifted over the head of one of the enemy's officers, when, looking down, he saw that the officer's right arm was broken. The Count immediately stopped, took hold of the disabled officer's bridle, and led him off to a place of safety.—This and many other anecdotes Mr. Gresham heard, when he spent some time on the Continent a few years ago, whilst he was transacting some commercial plans.—He had full opportunities of learning the opinions of different parties; and he says, that it was the prayer of all the good and wise in Germany, whenever the hereditary prince should succeed to the throne, that Count Albert Altenberg might be his minister.

“ By the by, Mr. Gresham, though he is rather an elderly man, and looks remarkably cool and composed, shows all the warmth of youth, whenever any of his feelings are touched. He has enthusiasm of character, though not of man-

ner. M. de Tourville had enthusiasm of manner, but not of character.

“ I wish you could see how much my father is pleased with your friend.—He has frequently repeated—that Mr. Gresham, long as he has been trained in the habits of mercantile life, is quite free from the spirit of monopoly in small or great affairs. My father rejoices, that his son has made such a friend.—Rosalmond charged me to leave her room to write to you at the end of my letter ; but she is listening so intently to something Mr. Gresham is telling her, that I do not believe she will write one line. I hear a few words, which so much excite my curiosity, that I must go and listen too——Adieu.

Affectionately yours,

CAROLINE PERCY.”

Another letter from Caroline to Erasmus, dated some weeks after the preceding :

Tuesday, 14th.

“ Yes, my dear Erasmus, your friend, Mr. Gresham, is still with us; and he declares, that he has not, for many years, been so happy as since he came here. He is now sufficiently intimate in this family to speak of himself, and of his own feelings and plans. You, who know what a horror he has of egotism, will consider this as a strong proof of his liking us, and of his confidence in our regard. He has related many of the instances, which, I suppose, he told you, of the ingratitude and disappointments he has met with from persons whom he attempted to serve.—He has kept us all, for hours, Rosamond especially, in a state of alternate pity and indignation. For all that has happened, he blames himself more than he blames any one else; and with a mildness and candor, which makes us at once admire and love him, he adverts to the causes of his own disappointment.

“ My father has spoken to him as freely as you could desire. He has urged, that as far as the public good is concerned, free competition is more advantageous to the arts and to artists, than any private patronage can be.—

“ If the productions have real merit, they will make their own way.—If they have not merit, they ought not to make their way—And the same argument he has applied to literary merit, and to the merit, generally speaking, of persons as well as of things; he has also plainly told Mr. Gresham, that he considers the trade of a patron as one of the most thankless, as it is the least useful, of all trades.

“ All this has made such an impression upon your candid friend, that he has declared it to be his determination to have no more protégées,—convinced that it is much better to leave artists and men of letters to advance themselves by their own efforts, and to let the competition of talents work fairly without the

interference, or, as he expressed it, any of the *bounties* and *drawbacks* of patronage. ‘ But then,’ he added, with a sigh, ‘ I am an isolated being—Am I to pass the remainder of my days without objects of interest or affection——While Constance Panton was a child, she was an object to me, but now she must live with her parents, or she will marry, at all events she is rich,—and is my wealth to be only for my selfish gratification? —How happy you are, Mr. Percy, who have such an amiable wife, such a large family, and so many charming domestic objects of affection!’—

“ Mr. Gresham then walked away with my father to the end of the room, and continued his conversation in a low voice, to which I did not think I ought to listen, so I came up stairs to write to you.—I think you told me, that Mr. Gresham had suffered some disappointment early in life, which prevented his marrying; but if I am not mistaken, his mind now turns again to the hopes of

domestic happiness—If I am not mistaken, Rosamond has made an impression on his heart. I have been as conveniently and meritoriously deaf, blind, and stupid for some time past, as possible—But though I shut my eyes, and stop my ears, yet my imagination will act, and I can only say to myself, as we used to do when we were children,

“ I will not think of it till it comes, that I may have the pleasure of the surprise—* * * * *

Affectionately yours,

CAROLINE PERCY.”

Caroline was right—Rosamond had made a great impression upon Mr. Gresham’s heart.—His recollection of the difference between his age and Rosamond’s, and his consciousness of the want of the gayety and attractions of youth, rendered him extremely diffident, and for some time suppressed his passion, at least delayed the declaration of his attachment. But Rosamond seemed

evidently to like his company and conversation, and she showed that degree of esteem and interest for him, which, he flattered himself, might be improved into a more tender affection. He ventured to make his proposal—He applied first to Mrs. Percy, and entreated that she would make known his sentiments to her daughter.

When Mrs. Percy spoke to Rosamond, she was surprised, by the very decided refusal which Rosamond immediately gave. Both Mrs. Percy and Caroline were inclined to think, that Rosamond had not only a high opinion of Mr. Gresham, but that she had felt a preference for him, which she had never before shown for any other person—and they thought that, perhaps, some refinement of delicacy about accepting his large fortune, or some fear that his want of high birth, and what are called good connexions, would be objected to by her father and mother, might be the cause of this refusal. Mrs. Percy felt extremely anx-

ious to explain her own sentiments, and fully to understand Rosamond's feelings.—In this anxiety Caroline joined most earnestly; all the kindness, sympathy, and ardent affection, which Rosamond had ever shown for her, when the interests of her heart were in question, were strong in Caroline's recollection, and these were now fully returned. Caroline thought Mr. Gresham was too old for her sister, but she considered that this objection, and all others, should yield to Rosamond's own opinion and taste. She agreed with her mother in imagining, that Rosamond was not quite indifferent to his merit and to his attachment.

Mrs. Percy began by assuring Rosamond, that she should be left entirely at liberty to decide according to her own judgment and feelings.—

“ You have seen, my dear, how your father and I have acted towards your sister; and you may be sure, that we shall show you equal justice. Though parents

are accused of always rating 'a good estate above a faithful lover,' yet you will recollect, that Mr. Barclay's good estate did not induce us to press his suit with Caroline. Mr. Gresham has a large fortune; and, to speak in Lady Jane Granville's style, it must be acknowledged, my dear Rosamond, that this would be a most advantageous match; but for this very reason we are particularly desirous, that you should determine for yourself—At the same time let me tell you, that I am a little surprised by the promptness of your decision—Let me be sure, that this negative is serious—Let me be sure, that I rightly understand you, my Love—Now, when only your own Caroline is present, tell me what are your objections to Mr. Gresham?"

Thanks for her mother's kindness; thanks, repeated, with tears in her eyes, were, for a considerable time, all the answer that could be obtained from Rosamond. At length, she said :

“ Without having any particular objection to a person, surely, if I cannot love him, that is sufficient reason for my not wishing to marry him”—

Rosamond spoke these words in so feeble a tone, and with so much hesitation, coloring at the same time so much, that her mother and sister were still uncertain how they were to understand her *if*—and Mrs. Percy replied :

“ Undoubtedly, my dear, *if* you cannot love him—but that is the question. Is it quite certain that you cannot love him ?”

“ Oh ! quite certain I believe.”

“ This certainty seems to have come very suddenly,” said her mother, smiling.

“ What can you mean, mother ?”

“ I mean, that you did not show any decided dislike to him till within these few hours, my dear.”

“ Dislike !—I don’t feel I hope I don’t show any dislike—I am sure I

should be very ungrateful On the contrary . . . It would be impossible for any body, who is good for any thing, to *dislike* Mr. Gresham."

"Then you can neither like him, nor dislike him?—You are in a state of absolute indifference."

"That is, except . . . gratitude—gratitude for all his kindness to Erasmus, and for his partiality to me—gratitude I certainly feel."

"And esteem?"

"Yes, to be sure, esteem"—

"And I think," continued her mother, "that before he committed this crime of proposing for you, Rosamond, you used to show some of the indignation of a good friend against those ungrateful people who used him so ill."

"Indignation! yes," interrupted Rosamond, "who could avoid feeling indignation?"

"And pity?—I think I have heard you express pity for poor Mr. Gresham."

“ Well, Ma’am, because he really was very much to be pitied—Don’t you think so ?”

“ I do—and pity . . . you know to what it is akin ?” said Mrs. Percy, smiling.

“ No, indeed, mother, you need not smile—nor you, Caroline—for the sort of pity which I feel is not akin to . . . it was merely pity, by itself plain pity—Why should people imagine and insist upon it, that more is felt than is expressed ?”

“ My dear,” said Mrs. Percy, “ I do not insist upon your feeling more than you really do—But let us see—You are in a state of absolute indifference, and yet you feel esteem, indignation, pity—How is this, Rosamond ? How can this be ?”

“ Very easily, Ma’am, because, by absolute indifference, I mean Oh ! you know very well what I mean . . . absolute indifference as to”

“ Love, perhaps, is the word which you cannot pronounce this morning”—

“ Now, mother!———Now Caroline!——You fancy that I love him——But only tell why, supposing there were any *if* in the case on my side . . . tell me only *why* I should refuse him ?”

“ Nay, my dear, that is what we wait to hear from you,” said Mrs. Percy.

“ Then I will tell you why,” said Rosamond—“ In the first place, Mr. Gresham has a large fortune, and I have none. And I have the greatest horror of the idea of marrying for money, or of the possibility of it’s being suspected, that I might do so.”

“ I thought that was the fear !” cried Caroline ; “ but, my dear Rosamond, with your generous mind you know it is quite impossible, that you should marry from interested motives.”

“ Absolutely impossible,” said her mother. “ And when you are sure of your own mind, it would be weakness,

my dear, to dread the suspicions of others, even if such were likely to be formed"—

"Oh! do not, my dearest Rosamond," said Caroline, taking her sister's hand, pressing it between hers, and speaking in the most urgent, almost supplicating tone, do not, generous as you are, sacrifice your happiness to mistaken delicacy!"——

"But"——said Rosamond, after a moment's silence—"But you attribute more than I deserve to my delicacy and generosity. I ought not to let you think me so much better than I really am—I had some other motives——You will think them very foolish . . . very ridiculous . . . perhaps wrong——But you are so kind and indulgent to me, mother, that I will tell you all my follies.—I do not like to marry a man who is not a hero——You are very good not to laugh, Caroline"——

"Indeed, I am too seriously interested at present to laugh"—said Caroline.

“ And you must be sensible,” continued Rosamond, “ that I could not, by any effort of imagination, or by any illusion of love, convert a man of Mr. Gresham’s time of life and appearance, with his wig, and sober kind of understanding, into a hero.”

“ As to the wig,” replied Mrs. Percy, “ you will recollect, that both Sir Charles Grandison and Lovelace wore wigs—But, my dear, granting that a man cannot, in these days, be a hero in a wig ; and granting, that a hero cannot, or should not, have a sober understanding, will you give me leave to ask, whether you have positively determined, that none but heroes and heroines should live, or love, or marry, or be happy in this mortal world ?”

“ Heaven forbid !” said Rosamond, “ particularly as I am not a heroine.”

“ And as only a few hundred millions of people in the world are in the same condition,” added Mrs. Percy.—

“ And those, perhaps, not the least

happy of human beings," said Caroline—"Be that as it may, I think it cannot be denied, that Mr. Gresham has, in a high degree, one of the qualities which ought to distinguish a hero."

"What?" said Rosamond, eagerly.

"Generosity," replied Caroline—"and his large fortune, puts it in his power to show that quality upon a scale, more extended than is usually allowed, even to the heroes of romance."

"True—very true"—said Rosamond, smiling—"generosity might make a hero of him if he were not . . . a merchant . . . a merchant!—A Percy ought not to marry a merchant."

"Perhaps, my dear," said Mrs. Percy, "you don't know that half, at least, of all the nobility in England, have married into the families of merchants; therefore, in the opinion of half the nobility of England, there can be nothing discreditable or derogatory in such an alliance."

"I know, Ma'am, such things are,

but, then, you will allow, they are usually done for money, and that makes the matter worse. If the sons of noble families marry the daughters of mercantile houses, it is merely to repair the family fortune. But a nobleman has great privileges.—If he marry beneath himself, his low wife is immediately raised by her wedding-ring to an equality with the high and mighty husband—her name is forgotten in her title,—her vulgar relations are left in convenient obscurity; the husband never thinks of taking notice of them; and the wife, of course, may let it alone if she pleases—But a woman, in our rank of life, usually bears her husband's name, and must also bear all his relations, be they ever so vulgar.—Now, Caroline, honestly—how should you like this?”

“Honestly, not at all,” said Caroline; “but as we cannot have every thing we like, or avoid every thing we dislike in life, we must balance the good against the evil, when we are to make

our choice—And if I found certain amiable, estimable qualities in a character, I think that I might esteem, love, and marry him, even though he had a vulgar name, and vulgar connexions. I fairly acknowledge, however, that it must be something superior in the man's character, which could balance the objection to vulgarity in my mind."

"Very well, my dear," said Rosamond, "do you be a martyr to vulgarity and philosophy, if you like it—but excuse me, if you please—Since you, who have so much strength of mind, fairly acknowledge, that this objection is barely to be overcome by your utmost efforts, do me the favor, do me the justice, not to expect from me a degree of civil courage quite above my powers."

Caroline still believing, that Rosamond was only bringing forward all the objections that might be raised against her wishes, replied—

"Fortunately, my dear Rosamond,

you are not called upon for any such effort of philosophy, for Mr. Gresham is not vulgar, nor is even his name vulgar, and he cannot have any vulgar relations, because he has no relations of any description—I heard him say, the other day, that he was an isolated being.”—

“That is a comfort,” said Rosamond, laughing, “that is a great thing in his favor—but if he has not relations he has connexions. What do you think of those horrible Pantons? This instant I think I see Old Panton cooling himself—wig pushed back—waistcoat unbuttoned—and protuberant Mrs. Panton with her bay wig and artificial flowers. And not the Pantons only, but you may be sure there are hordes of St. Mary Axe cockneys, that would pour forth upon *Mrs. Gresham*, with overwhelming force, and with partnership and old-acquaintance-sake claims upon her public notice and private intimacy—Come! come, my dear Caroline, don’t speak against

your conscience—You know you never could withstand the hordes of *vulgarians*.”

“ These vulgarians in buckram,” said Caroline, “ have grown from two to two hundred in a trice, in your imagination, Rosamond—but consider that Old Panton, against whom you have such an invincible horror, will, now that he has quarrelled with Erasmus, probably very soon eat himself out of the world ; and I don’t see that you are bound to Mr. Gresham’s dead partner’s widow—Is this your only objection to Mr. Gresham ? ”—

“ My only objection !—Oh ! no, don’t flatter yourself, that in killing Old Panton you have struck off all my objections—Independently of vulgar relations, or connexions, my grand objection remains—But I will address myself to my mother, for you are not a good person for judging of prejudices—You really don’t understand them, my dear Caroline—One might as well talk to Socrates

—You go to work with logic, and get one between the horns of a wicked dilemma directly—I will talk to my mother, she understands prejudices.”

“Your mother thanks you,” said Mrs. Percy, smiling, “for your opinion of her understanding.”—

“My mother is the most indulgent of mothers, and besides, the most candid, and, therefore, I know she will confess to me, that she herself cherishes a little darling prejudice in favor of birth and family, a *leetle* prejudice . . . well covered by good nature and politeness . . . but still a secret, invincible antipathy to low-born people.”

“To low-bred people, I grant.”

“Oh, mother! you are *upon your candor*; my dear mother, not only low-bred, but low-born,—confess you have a, what shall I call it? . . . an *indisposition* towards low-born people.”

“Since you put me upon my candor,” said Mrs. Percy, “I am afraid I must

confess, that I am conscious of a little of the aristocratic weakness you impute to me."

"Impute!—No imputation in my opinion," cried Rosamond. "I do not think it any weakness."

"But I do—" said Mrs. Percy, "I consider it as a weakness; and bitterly should I reproach myself, if I saw any weakness, any prejudice of mine, influence my children injuriously in the most material circumstance of their lives, and where their happiness is at stake.—So, my dear Rosamond, let me entreat . . ."

"Oh! mother, don't let the tears come into your eyes, and without any entreaties, I will do just as you please."

"My love,"—said Mrs. Percy, "I have no pleasure but that you should please yourself—and judge for yourself—without referring to any prepossession of mine.—And lest your imagination should deceive you as to the extent of my aristocratic prejudices, let me ex-

plain. The *indisposition*, which I have acknowledged I feel towards low-born people, arises, I believe, chiefly from my taking it for granted, that they cannot be thoroughly well-bred. I have accidentally seen examples of people of inferior birth, who, though they had risen to high station, and though they had acquired, in a certain degree, polite manners, and had been metamorphosed by fashion, to all outward appearance, into perfect gentry, yet betrayed some marks of their origin, or of their early education, whenever their passions or their interests were touched: then some awkward gesture, some vulgar expression, some mean or mercenary sentiment, some habitual contradiction of mind, recurred."

"True, true! most true!" cried Rosamond.—"It requires two generations, at least, to wash out the stain of vulgarity. Neither a gentleman nor a gentlewoman can be made in less than two

generations. Therefore, I never will marry a low-born man, if he had every perfection under the sun."

"Nay, my dear, that is too strong," said Mrs. Percy.—"Hear me, my dearest Rosamond. I was going to tell you, that my experience has been so limited, that I am not justified in drawing from it any general conclusion.—And even to the most positive and rational general rules, you know there are exceptions."

"That is a fine general softening clause," said Rosamond, "but now positively, mother, would you have ever consented to marry a merchant?"

"Certainly, my dear, if your father had been a merchant, I should have married him," replied Mrs. Percy.

"Well, I except my father. To put the question more fairly, may I ask, do you wish that your daughter should marry a merchant?"

"As I endeavored to explain to you before, *that* depends entirely upon what

the merchant is, and upon what my daughter feels for him."

Rosamond sighed.

"I ought to observe, that merchants are now quite in a different class from what they were at the first rise of commerce in these countries," continued her mother.—"Their education, their habits of thinking, knowledge, and manners, are improved, and, consequently, their *consideration*, their rank in society, is raised. In our days, some of the best informed, most liberal, and most respectable men in the British dominions, are merchants.—I could not, therefore, object to my daughter's marrying a merchant, but I should certainly inquire anxiously what sort of a merchant he was.—I do not mean, that I should inquire whether he was concerned in this or that branch of commerce, but whether his mind was free from every thing mercenary and illiberal.—I have done so with respect to Mr. Gresham, and I can assure you solemnly, that Mr. Gre-

sham's want of the advantage of high birth is completely counterbalanced in my opinion by his superior qualities. I see in him a cultivated, enlarged, generous mind.—I have seen him tried, where his passions and his interests have been nearly concerned, and I never saw in him the slightest tincture of vulgarity, in manner or sentiment. Therefore, my dear daughter, if he has made an impression on your heart, do not, on my account, conceal or struggle against it; because, far from objecting to Mr. Gresham for a son in law, I should prefer him to any gentleman or nobleman, who had not his exalted character.”——

“ There!” cried Caroline, with a look of joyful triumph, “ there! my dear Rosamond, now your heart must be quite at ease!”——

But looking at Rosamond at this moment, she saw no expression of joy or pleasure in her countenance; and Caroline was now convinced, that she had

been mistaken about Rosamond's feelings.—

“ Really and truly, mother, you think all this.”——

“ Really and truly, my dear, no motive upon Earth would make me disguise my opinions, or palliate even my prejudices, when you thus consult me, and depend upon my truth.—And now, that I have said this much, I will say no more, lest I should bias you on the other side : I will leave you to your own excellent understanding and affectionate heart.”

Rosamond's affectionate heart was touched so by her mother's kindness, that she could not, for some minutes, repress her tears. When she recovered her voice, she assured her mother and Caroline, with a seriousness and an earnest frankness, which at once convinced them of her truth, that she had not the slightest partiality for Mr. Gresham. She said, she had feared, that her friends

might wish for the match, and that being conscious, she had no objection to make to Mr. Gresham, except that she could not love him; she had hesitated for want of a better reason, when her mother first began this cross examination.

Relieved by this thorough explanation, and by the conviction that her father, mother, and sister, were perfectly satisfied with her decision, Rosamond was at ease, as far as she herself was concerned. But she still dreaded to see Mr. Gresham again. She was excessively sorry to have given him pain, and she feared not a little, that in rejecting the lover she should lose the friend.—

Mr. Gresham, however, was of too generous a character to cease to be the friend of the woman he loved, merely because she could not return his passion.—It is wounded pride, not disappointed affection, that turns immediately from love to hatred.

Rosamond was spared the pain of

seeing Mr. Gresham again at this time, for he left the Hills, and set out immediately for London, where he was recalled by news of the sudden death of his partner. Old Mr. Panton had been found dead in his bed, after having supped inordinately the preceding night upon eelpie. It was indispensably necessary, that Mr. Gresham should attend at the opening of Panton's will, and Mrs. Panton wrote to represent this in urgent terms. Mr. Henry was gone to Amsterdam; he had, for some time previously to the death of Mr. Panton, obtained the partnership's permission to go over to the Dutch merchants, their correspondents in Amsterdam, to fill a situation in their house, for which his knowledge of the Dutch, French, and Spanish languages eminently qualified him.

When Mr. Henry had solicited this employment, Mr. Gresham had been unwilling to part with him, but had yielded to the young man's earnest en-

treaties, and to the idea that this change would, in a lucrative point of view, be materially for Mr. Henry's advantage.—

Some apology to the lovers of romance may be expected for this abrupt transition from the affairs of the heart to the affairs of the counting-house, but so it is in real life—We are sorry, but we cannot help it—We have neither sentiments nor sonnets ready for every occasion.

CHAPTER XXII.

Letter from Alfred.

This appears to have been written some months after the vacation spent at the Hills.

“Oh! thoughtless mortals, ever blind to fate,
“Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.”

“YOU remember, I am sure, my dear father, how angry we were some time ago with that man, whose name I never would tell you, the man whom Rosamond called Counsellor *Nameless*, the lawyer, who snatched a *good point* from me in arguing Mr. Hauton's cause. This very circumstance has been the means of introducing me to the notice of three men, all eminent in their profession, and each with the same incli-

nation to serve me, according to their respective powers.—A solicitor,—a barrister, and a judge.—Solicitor Babington, (by the by, pray tell Rosamond in answer to her question, whether there is an honest attorney—that there are no such things as *attorneys* now in England, they are all turned into solicitors and agents, just as every *shop* is become a *warehouse*, and every *service* a *situation*,—Solicitor Babington, the solicitor employed against us in that suit, a man who knows, without practising them, all the tricks of the trade, and who is a thoroughly honest man, saw the trick that was played by *Nameless*, and took occasion afterwards to recommend me to several of his own clients. Upon the strength of this *point* briefs appeared on my table, day after day—two guineas, three guineas—five guineas! comfortable sight!—But far more comfortable, more gratifying the kindness of Counsellor Friend—Friend by name, and Friend by nature—A more benevolent man never existed.—I am sure

the profession of the law has not contracted his heart, and yet you never saw or can conceive a man more intent upon his business.—I believe he eats, drinks, and sleeps upon law; he has the reputation, in consequence, of being one of the soundest of our lawyers—the best opinion in England.—He seems to make the cause of every client his own, and is as anxious as if his private property depended on the fate of each suit. He sets me a fine example of labor, perseverance, professional enthusiasm, and rectitude. He is one of the very best friends a young lawyer like me could have, he puts me in the way I should go, and keeps me in it by showing that it is not a matter of chance, but of certainty, that this is the right road to fortune, and to fame.

“ Mr. Friend has sometimes a way of paying a compliment, as if he was making a reproach, and of doing a favor, as a matter of course.—Just now, I met him, and à propos to some observations I happened to make on a cause, in which

he is engaged,—He said to me, as if he was half angry, though I knew he was thoroughly pleased,

“ ‘ Quick parts ! yes, so I see you have—but take care !—In your profession ’tis often ‘ Most haste, worst speed ’—Not but what there are happy exceptions, examples of lawyers, who have combined judgment with wit, industry with genius, and law with eloquence. But these instances are rare, very rare ; for the rarity of the case worth studying. Therefore dine with me to morrow, and I will introduce you to one of these exceptions.’ ”

“ The person in question, I opine, is the Lord Chief Justice—and Friend could not do me a greater favor than to introduce me to one whom, as you know, I have long admired in public, and with whom, independently of my professional advantage, I have ardently wished to be acquainted.

“ I have been told I cannot tell you what—for here’s the bell-man.—I

don't wonder 'the choleric man' knocked down the postman for blowing his horn in his ear.

Abruptly yours,
—ALFRED PERCY."

Alfred had good reason to desire to be acquainted with this Lord Chief Justice. Some French writer says, "*Qu'il faut plier les grandes ailes de l'éloquence pour entrer dans un salon.*"—The Chief Justice did so with peculiar ease. He possessed perfect conversational *tact*, with great powers of wit, humor, and all that felicity of allusion, which an uncommonly recollective memory, acting on stores of various knowledge, can alone command. He really conversed; he did not merely tell stories, or make bon-mots, or confine himself to the single combat of close argument, or the flourish of declamation; but he alternately followed and led, threw out and received ideas, knowing how to listen full as well as how to talk, remembering always Lord Chester-

field's experienced maxim, "That it is easier to hear, than to talk yourself into the good opinion of your auditors."—It was not, however, from policy, but from benevolence, that the Chief Justice made so good a hearer. It has been said, and with truth, that with him a *good point* never passed unnoticed in a public court, nor was a *good thing* ever lost upon him in private company. Of the number of his own good things fewer are in circulation than might be expected. The best conversation, that which rises from the occasion, and which suits the moment, suffers most from repetition. Fitted precisely to the peculiar time and place, the best things cannot bear transplanting.

The day Alfred Percy was introduced to the Chief Justice, the conversation began, from some slight remarks made by one of the company, on the acting of Mrs. Siddons. A lady who had just been reading the Memoirs of the celebrated French actress, Mademoiselle Clairon, spoke of the astonishing pains, which she

took to study her parts, and to acquire what the French call *l' air noble*, continually endeavoring, on the most common occasions, when she was off the stage, to avoid all awkward motions, and in her habitual manner to preserve an air of grace and dignity.—This led the Chief Justice to mention the care, which Lord Chatham, Mr. Pitt, and other great orators, have taken to form their habits of speaking by unremitting attention to their language in private, as well as in public. He maintained, that no man *can* speak with ease, and security, in public, till custom has brought him to feel it as a moral impossibility, that he could be guilty of any petty vulgarism, or that he could be convicted of any capital sin against grammar.

Alfred felt anxious to hear the Chief Justice farther on this subject, but the conversation was dragged back to Mademoiselle Clairon. The lady, by whom she was first mentioned, declared she thought that all Mademoiselle Clairon's

studying must have made her a very unnatural actress.—The Chief Justice quoted the answer, which La Clairon gave when she was reproached with having too much art.

“ *De l'art ! et que voudroit-on donc que j'eusse ? Etois-je Andromaque ?—Etois-je Phédre ?* ”

Alfred observed, that those who complained of an actress's having too much art, should rather complain of her having too little, of her not having art enough to conceal her art.

The Chief Justice honored Alfred by a nod and a smile.—

The lady, however, protested against this doctrine, and concluded by confessing, that she always did, “ and always should, prefer nature to art.”

From this commonplace confession, the Chief Justice, by a playful cross-examination, presently made it apparent, that we do not always know what we mean by art, and what by nature ; that the ideas are so mixed in civilized

society, and the words so inaccurately used, both in common conversation, and in the writings of philosophers, that no metaphysical prism can separate, or reduce them to their primary meaning.—Next he touched upon the distinction between art and artifice.—The conversation branched out into remarks on grace and affectation, and thence to the different theories of beauty, and taste, with all which he *played* with a master's hand.

A man accustomed to speak to numbers perceives immediately when his auditors seize his ideas, and knows instantly, by the assent, and expression of the eye, to whom they are new, or to whom they are familiar. The Chief Justice discovered, that Alfred Percy had superior knowledge, literature, and talents, even before he spoke, by his manner of listening.—The conversation presently passed from *l'air noble* to *le style noble*, and to the French laws of criticism, which prohibit the descending to allusions to arts

and manufactures. This subject he discussed deeply, yet rapidly, observed how taste is influenced by different governments and manners—remarked how the strong line of demarcation formerly kept in France between the nobility and the citizens had influenced taste in writing and in eloquence, and how our more *popular* government not only admitted allusions to the occupations of the lower classes—but required them. Our orators at elections, and in parliament, must speak so as to come home to the feelings and vocabulary of constituents. Examples from Burke, and others, the Chief Justice said might be brought in support of this opinion.

Alfred was so fortunate as to recollect some apposite illustrations from Burke, and from several of our great orators, Wyndham, Erskine, Mackintosh, and Romilly. As Alfred spoke, the Chief Justice's eye brightened with approbation, and it was observed, that he afterwards addressed to him particularly his

conversation, and, more flattering still, that he went deeper into the subject, which he had been discussing. From one of the passages which had been mentioned, he took occasion to answer the argument of the French critics, who justify their taste, by asserting that it is the taste of the ancients. Skilled in classical, as in modern literature, he showed, that the ancients had made allusions to arts and manufactures, as far as their knowledge went; but, as he observed, in modern times new arts and sciences afford fresh subjects of allusion unknown to the ancients, consequently we ought not to restrict our taste by exclusive reverence for classical precedents.—On these points it is requisite to reform the pandects of criticism.—

Another passage from Burke, to which Alfred had alluded, the Chief Justice thought too rich in ornament. “Ornaments,” he said, “if not kept subordinate, however intrinsically beautiful, injure the general effect,—therefore a judi-

cious orator will sacrifice all such as draw the attention from his principal design."

Alfred Percy, in support of this opinion, cited the example of the Spanish painter, who obliterated certain beautiful silver vases, which he had introduced in a picture of the Lord's Supper, because he found that, at first view, every spectator's eye was caught by these splendid ornaments, and every one extolled their exquisite finish, instead of attending to the great subject of the piece."—

The Chief Justice was so well pleased with the conversation of our young barrister, that, at parting, he gave Alfred an invitation to his house. The conversation had been very different from what might have been expected. Metaphysics—belles-lettres—poetry—plays—criticism—what a range of ideas, far from Coke and Seldon, was gone over this evening in the course of a few hours. Alfred had reason to be more and more convinced of the truth of his father's favorite doctrine, that the general cultivation of

the understanding, and the acquirement of general knowledge, are essential to the attainment of excellence in any profession, useful to a young man particularly in introducing him to the notice of valuable friends and acquaintance.

An author well skilled in the worst parts of human nature has asserted, that “nothing is more tiresome than praises in which we have no manner of share.”—Yet we, who have a better opinion of our kind, trust that there are some, who can sympathize in the enthusiasm of a young and good mind, struck with splendid talents, and with a superior character; therefore we venture to insert some of the warm eulogiums, with which we find our young lawyer’s letters filled.

“MY DEAR FATHER,

I have only a few moments to write, but cannot delay to answer your question about the Chief Justice.—*Disappointed*—no danger of that—he far surpasses my expectations. It has been

said, that he never opened a book, that he never heard a common ballad, or saw a workman at his trade, without learning something, which he afterwards turned to good account. This you may see in his public speeches, but I am more completely convinced of it, since I have heard him converse. His illustrations are drawn from the workshop, the manufactory, the mine, the mechanic, the poet, from every art and science, from every thing in nature, animate or inanimate.

‘From gems, from flames, from orient rays of light,
The richest lustre makes his purple bright.’

“Perhaps I am writing his panegyric, because he is my Lord Chief Justice, and because I dined with him yesterday, and am to dine with him again to morrow.—

Yours affectionately,

ALFRED PERCY.”

In a subsequent letter he shows, that his admiration increased instead of diminish-

ing, upon a more intimate acquaintance with it's object.

“ High station,” says Alfred—“ appears to me much more desirable, since I have known this great man. He makes rank so gracious, and shows, that it is a pleasurable, not a ‘ painful preeminence,’ when it gives the power of raising others, and of continually doing kind and generous actions. Mr. Friend tells me, that, before the Chief Justice was so high as he is now, without a rival in his profession, he was ever the most generous man to his competitors. I am sure he is now the most kind and condescending to his inferiors. In company he is never intent upon himself, seems never anxious about his own dignity, or his own fame. He is sufficiently sure of both to be quite at ease.—He excites my ambition, and exalts the nature and value of that ambition.

“ He has raised my esteem for my profession, by showing the noble use that can be made of it, in defending right and

virtue.—He has done my mind good in another way.—He has shown me, that professional labor is not incompatible with domestic pleasures.—I wish you could see him as I do, in the midst of his family, with his fine children playing about him, with his wife, a charming cultivated woman, who adores him, and who is his best companion and friend. Before I knew the Chief Justice, I had seen other great lawyers and judges, some of them crabbed old bachelors, others uneasily yoked to vulgar help-mates—having married early in life women whom they had dragged up as they rose, but who were always pulling them down,—had seen some of these learned men sink into mere epicures, and become dead to intellectual enjoyment—others, with higher minds, and originally fine talents, I had seen in premature old age, with understandings contracted and palsied by partial or overstrained exertion, worn out mind and body, and only late, very late in life, just attaining wealth and honors,

when they were incapable of enjoying them. This had struck me as a deplorable and discouraging spectacle—a sad termination of a life of labor.—But now I see a man in the prime of life, in the full vigor of all his intellectual faculties and moral sensibility, with a high character, fortune, and professional honors, all obtained by his own merit and exertions, with the prospect of health and length of days, to enjoy and communicate happiness. Exulting in the sight of this resplendent luminary, and conscious, that it will guide and cheer me forwards, I “bless the useful light.”—

Our young lawyer was so honestly enthusiastic in his admiration of this great man, and was so full of the impression, that had been made on his mind, that he forgot in this letter to advert to the advantage, which, in a professional point of view, he might derive from the good opinion formed of him by the Chief Justice. In consequence of Solicitor Babington’s telling his clients the share

which Alfred had in winning Colonel Hauton's cause, Alfred was employed in a suit of considerable importance, in which a great landed property was at stake. It was one of those standing suits, which last from year to year, and which seem likely to linger on from generation to generation. Instead of considering his brief in this cause merely as a means of obtaining a fee; instead of contenting himself to make some *motion of course*, which fell to his share, Alfred set himself seriously to study the case, and searched indefatigably for all the precedents that could bear upon it. He was fortunate enough, or rather he was persevering enough, to find an old case in point, which had escaped the attention of the other lawyers. Mr. Friend was one of the senior counsel in this cause, and he took generous care, that Alfred's merit should not now, as upon a former occasion, be concealed. Mr. Friend prevailed upon his brother barristers to agree, in calling upon Alfred

to speak to his own *case in point*—And the Chief Justice, who presided, said “This case is new to me.—This had escaped me, Mr. Percy; I must take another day to reconsider the matter, before I can pronounce judgment.”

This from the Chief Justice, with the sense which Alfred's brother barristers felt of his deserving such notice, was of immediate and material advantage to our young lawyer. Attorneys and Solicitors turned their eyes upon him, briefs began to flow in, and his diligence increased with his business. As junior counsel, he still had little opportunity in the common course of things of distinguishing himself, as it frequently fell to his share only to say a few words; but he never failed to make himself master of every case, in which he was employed. And it happened one day, when the senior counsel was attending in another court, the Judge called upon the next barrister,

“Mr. Trevors—Are you prepared?”

“ My Lord I can't say no, my Lord.”—

“ Mr. Percy, are you prepared?”

“ Yes—my Lord.”

“ So I thought—always prepared—Go on, Sir—Go on, Mr. Percy.”

He went on, and spoke so ably, and with such comprehensive knowledge of the case, and of the law, that he obtained a decision in favor of his client, and established his own reputation as a man of business and of talents, who was *always prepared*.—For the manner, in which he was brought forward and distinguished by the Chief Justice, he was truly grateful. This was a species of patronage honorable both to the giver and the receiver. Here was no favor shown disproportionate to deserts, but here was just distinction paid to merit, and generous discernment giving talents opportunity of developing themselves. These opportunities would only have been the ruin of a man, who could not show himself equal to the occasion; but this was

not the case with Alfred. His capacity, like the fairy tent, seemed to enlarge so as to contain all that it was necessary to comprehend: and new powers appeared in him in new situations.

Alfred had been introduced by his brother Erasmus to some of those men of literature, with whom he had become acquainted at Lady Spilsbury's good dinners.—Among these was a Mr. Dunbar, a gentleman, who had resided for many years in India, from whom Alfred, who constantly sought for information from all with whom he conversed, had learned much of India affairs. Mr. Dunbar had collected some curious tracts on Mohammedan law, and glad to find an intelligent auditor on his favorite subject, a subject not generally interesting, he willingly communicated all he knew to Alfred, and lent him his manuscripts and scarce tracts, which Alfred, in the many leisure hours that a young lawyer can command before he gets into practice, had studied, and of which he had made

himself master. This was again according to his father's favorite principle, that all knowledge may be useful. It happened a considerable time afterwards, that the East-India Company had a cause, one of the greatest causes ever brought before our courts of law, relative to the demand of some native bankers in Hindostan against the Company for upwards of four millions of money. This Mr. Dunbar, who had a considerable interest in the cause, and who was intimate with several of the directors, recommended it to them to employ Mr. Alfred Percy, who, as he knew, had had ample means of information, and who had studied a subject, of which few of his brother barristers had any knowledge. The very circumstance of his being employed in a cause of such importance was of great advantage to him; and the credit he gained by accurate and uncommon knowledge in the course of the suit at once raised his reputation among the best judges, and *established* him in the courts.

On another occasion, Alfred's moral character was as serviceable as his literary taste had been,—in recommending him to his clients. Buckhurst Falconer had introduced him to a certain Mr. Clay, known by the name of *French Clay*. In a conversation after dinner, when the ladies had retired, Mr. Clay had boasted of his successes with the fair sex, and had expressed many sentiments, that marked him for a profligate coxcomb.

Alfred felt disgust and indignation for this parade of vice. There was one officer in company, who strongly sympathized in his feelings; this led to further acquaintance, and mutual esteem.—This officer soon afterwards married Lady Harriot ———, a beautiful young woman, with whom he lived happily for some time, till unfortunately, while her husband was abroad with his regiment, chance brought the wife, at a watering place, into the company of French Clay, and imprudence, the love of flattery, coquetry,

and self-confidence, made her a victim to his vanity.—Love he had none—nor she either—but her disgrace was soon discovered, or revealed; and her unhappy and almost distracted husband immediately commenced a suit against Clay.—He chose Alfred Percy for his counsel. In this cause, where strong feelings of indignation were justly roused, and where there was room for oratory, Alfred spoke with such force and pathos, that every honest heart was touched.—The verdict of the Jury showed the impression which he had made upon them; his speech was universally admired, and those who had till now known him only as a man of business, and a sound lawyer, were surprised to find him suddenly display such powers of eloquence. Counsellor Friend's plain advice to him had always been,

“ Never harangue about nothing—if your client require it, he is a fool, and never mind him; never speak till you've

something to say, and then say only what you have to say.”

“ Words are like leaves, and where they most abound,

“ Much fruit of solid sense is seldom found.”

Friend now congratulated Alfred with all his honest affectionate heart, and said, with a frown that struggled hard with a smile,

“ Well ! I believe I must allow you to be an orator.—But, take care—don’t let the lawyer merge in the advocate. Bear it always in mind, that a mere man of words at the bar . . . or indeed any where else . . . is a mere man of straw.”

The Chief Justice, who knew how to say the kindest things in the most polite manner, was heard to observe, that,

“ Mr. Percy had done wisely, to begin by showing that he had laid a solid foundation of law, on which the ornaments of oratory could be raised high, and supported securely.”—

French Clay's *affair* with Lady Harriot had been much talked of in the fashionable world ; from a love of scandal, or a love of justice, from zeal in the cause of morality, or from natural curiosity, her trial had been a matter of general interest to the ladies, young and old. Of consequence Mr. Alfred Percy's speech was *prodigiously* read, and, from various motives, highly applauded. When a man begins to rise all hands . . . all hands but the hands of his rivals, are ready to push him up, and all tongues exclaim,

“ 'Twas I helped ; ”—or, “ 'Twas what I always foretold ! ”

The Lady Angelica Headingham now bethought herself, that she had a little poem, written by Mr. Alfred Percy, which had been given to her long ago by Miss Percy, and of which, at the time she received it, her Ladyship had thought so little, that, hardly deigning to bestow the customary tribute of a compliment, she had thrown it, scarcely pe-

rused, into her writing box. It was now worth while to rummage for it, and now, when the author had a *name*, her Ladyship discovered “ that the poem was charming ! absolutely charming !—Such an early indication of talents ! such a happy promise of genius !—Oh ! she had always foreseen, that Mr. Alfred Percy would make an uncommon figure in the world ! ”—

“ Bless me ! does your Ladyship know him ? ”

“ Oh ! intimately !—That is, I never saw *him* exactly—but all his family I’ve known intimately—ages ago in the country. ”

“ I should so like to meet him.—And do pray give me a copy of the verses.—And me !—and me ! ”

To work went the pens of all the female amateurs, in scribbling copies of “ *The Lawyer’s May-day.* ”—And away went the fair patroness in search of the author, —introduced herself with unabashed grace, invited him for “ Mon-

day, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday—Engaged! how unfortunate.—Well, for next week?—a fortnight hence, three weeks, positively she must have him at her *conversazione*—She must give him—No, he must give her a day, he must consent to lose a day.—So many of her friends and real judges were dying to see him.”

To save the lives of so many judges, Alfred consented to lose an evening—the day was fixed—Alfred found her *conversazione* very brilliant—was admired—and admired others in his turn as much as was expected.—It was an agreeable variety of company and of thought to him, and he promised to go sometimes to her Ladyship's parties.—A promise which delighted her much, particularly as he had not yet given a copy of the verses to Lady Spilsbury. Lady Spilsbury, to whom verses quickly worked round, was quite angry, that her friend Erasmus had not given her an early copy, and now invitations the most

pressing came from Lady Spilsbury to her excellent literary dinners. If Alfred had been so disposed, he might, among these fetchers and carriers of bays, have been extolled to the skies; but he had too much sense and prudence to lose the substance for the shadow, to sink a solid character into a *drawing-room reputation*. Of this he had seen the folly in Buckhurst Falconer's case, and now, if any further warning on this subject had been wanting, he would have taken it from the example of *poor* Seebright, the poet, whom he met the second time he went to Lady Angelica Headingham's. *Poor Seebright*, as the world already began to call him, from being an object of admiration, was beginning to sink into an object of pity. Instead of making himself independent by steady exertions in any respectable profession, instead of making his way in the republic of letters by some solid work of merit, he frittered away his time among fashionable amateurs, feeding upon their flattery, and

living on in the vain hope of patronage. Already the flight of his genius had been restrained, the force of his wing impaired; instead of soaring superior, he kept hovering near the Earth; his “kestrel courage fell,” he appeared to be almost tamed to the domestic state to which he was reduced—yet now and then a rebel sense of his former freedom, and of his present degradation, would appear.—

“Ah! if I were but independent as you are!——If I had but followed a profession as you have done,” said he to Alfred, when, apart from the crowd, they had an opportunity of conversing confidentially.

Alfred replied, “that it was not yet too late, that it was never too late for a man of spirit and talents to make himself independent: he then suggested to Mr. Seebright various ways of employing his powers, and pointed out some useful and creditable literary undertakings, by which he might acquire reputation. Seebright listened, his eye eagerly

catching at each new idea the first moment, the next turning off to something else, raising objections futile or fastidious, seeing nothing impossible in any dream of his imagination, where no effort of exertion was requisite, but finding every thing impracticable when he came to sober reality, where he was called upon to labor. In fact, he was one of the sort of people, who do not know what they want, or what they would be, who complain and complain, disappointed and discontented, at having sunk below their powers and their hopes, and are yet without capability of persevering exertion to emerge from their obscurity. Seebright was now become an inefficient being, whom no one could assist to any good purpose. Alfred, after a long, mazy, fruitless conversation, was convinced that the case was hopeless, and, sincerely pitying him, gave it up as irremediable.—Just as Alfred had come to this conclusion, and had sunk into silence, a relation of his, whom he had

not seen for a considerable time, entered the room, and passed by without noticing him. She was so much altered in her appearance, that he could scarcely believe he saw Lady Jane Granville. She looked out of spirits, and care-worn—he immediately observed, that less attention was paid to her than she used to command, she had obviously sunk considerably in importance, and appeared to feel this keenly. Upon inquiry, Alfred learnt, that she had lost a large portion of her fortune by a lawsuit, which she had managed, that is to say, mismanaged for herself; and she was still at law for the remainder of her estate, which, notwithstanding her right was undoubted, it was generally supposed that she would lose, for the same reason that occasioned her former failure, her pertinacity in following her own advice only. Alfred knew, that there had been some misunderstanding between Lady Jane and his family, that she had been offended by his sister Caroline's

having declined accepting her invitation to town, and from Mr. and Mrs. Percy's having differed with her in opinion as to the value of the *patronage* of fashion. Notwithstanding all this, he was convinced that Lady Jane, whatever her opinions might be, and whether mistaken or not, had been actuated by sincere regard for his family, for which he and they were grateful; and now was the time to show it, now when he was coming into notice in the world, and she declining in importance.—Therefore, though she had passed him by without recognising him, he went immediately, and spoke to her in so respectful and kind a manner—paid her the whole evening such marked attention, that she was quite pleased and touched. In reality she had been vexed with herself, for having persisted so long in her resentment, she wished for a fair opportunity for a reconciliation, and she rejoiced that Alfred thus opened the way for it. She invited him to come to see her the next

day, observing, as she put her card into his hand, that she no longer lived in her fine house in St. James's Place. Now that his motives could not be mistaken, he was assiduous in his visits, and when he had sufficiently obtained her confidence, he ventured to touch upon her affairs. She, proud to convince him of her abilities as a woman of business, explained her whole case, and descanted upon the blunders and folly of her solicitors and counsellors, especially upon the absurdity of the opinions which she had not followed. Her cause depended upon the replication she was to put in to a plea in special pleading: she thought she saw the way straight before her, and exclaimed vehemently against that love of the crooked path by which her lawyers seemed possessed.

Without disputing the legal soundness of her ladyship's opinion in her own peculiar case, Alfred, beginning at a great distance from her passions, quietly undertook, by relating to her cases which

had fallen under his own knowledge, to convince her, that plain common sense and reason could never lead her to the knowledge of the rules of special-pleading, or to the proper wording of those answers, on the *letter* of which the fate of a cause frequently depends. He confessed to her, that his own understanding had been so shocked, at first, by the apparent absurdity of the system, that he had almost abandoned the study, and that it had been only in consequence of actual experience, that he had at last discovered the utility of those rules. She insisted upon being also convinced before she could submit, but as it is not quite so easy as ladies sometimes think it is, to teach any art or science in two words, or to convey, in a moment, to the ignorant, the combined result of study and experience, Alfred declined this task, and could undertake only to show her Ladyship, by asking her opinion on various cases which had been decided in the courts, that it was possible she might

be mistaken ; and that, however superior her understanding, a court of law would infallibly decide according to it's own rules.

“ But good Heavens ! my dear Sir,” exclaimed Lady Jane, “ when, after I have paid the amount of my bond, and every farthing that I owe a creditor, yet this rogue says I have not, is not it a proper answer, that I owe him nothing.”

“ Pardon me, this would be considered as an evasive plea by the court, or as a *negative pregnant*.”

“ Oh, if you come to your *negative pregnant*s,” cried Lady Jane, “ it is impossible to understand you—I give up the point.”

To this conclusion it had been Alfred's object to bring her Ladyship, and when she was fully convinced of the insufficient limits of the human he never said the female, understanding, to comprehend these things without the aid of men learned in the law, he humbly offered his assistance to guide her out of

that labyrinth, into which, unwittingly and without any clew, she had ventured further and further, till she was just in the very jaws of nonsuit and ruin.—

She put her affairs completely into his hands, and promised, that she would no further interfere, even with her advice; for it was upon this condition, that Alfred engaged to undertake the management of her cause. Nothing indeed is more tormenting to men of business, than to be pestered with the incessant advice—hopes and fears—cautions and explanations—cunning suggestions—superficial knowledge, and profound ignorance, of lady or gentlemen lawyers.—Alfred now begged and obtained permission from the court to amend the Lady Jane Granville's last plea,—he thenceforward conducted the business, and played the game of special pleading with such strict and acute attention to the rules, that there were good hopes the remaining portion of her Ladyship's fortune, which was now at stake, might be saved. He en-

deavored to keep up her spirits and her patience, for of a speedy termination to the business there was no chance. They had to deal with adversaries, who knew how, on their side, to protract the pleadings, and to avoid what is called *coming to the point*.

It was a great pleasure to Alfred, thus to have it in his power to assist his friends, and the hope of serving them redoubled his diligence. About this time he was engaged in a cause for his brother's friend and Rosamond's admirer, Mr. Gresham.—A picture-dealer had cheated this gentleman, in the sale of a picture of considerable value.—Mr. Gresham had bargained for, and bought, an original Guido, wrote his name on the back of it, and directed that it should be sent to him. The painting which was taken to his house had his name written on the back, but was not the original Guido for which he had bargained, it was a copy. The picture-dealer, however, and two respectable

witnesses, were ready to swear positively, that this was the identical picture on which Mr. Gresham wrote his name—that they saw him write his name, and heard him order that it should be sent to him. Mr. Gresham himself acknowledged, that the writing was so like his own, that he could not venture to deny that it was his, and yet he could swear that this was not the picture for which he had bargained, and on which he had written his name. He suspected it to be a forgery; and was certain, that, by some means, one picture had been substituted for another. Yet the defendant had witnesses to prove, that the picture never was out of Mr. Gresham's sight, from the time he bargained for it, till the moment when he wrote his name on the back, in the presence of these same witnesses.

This chain of evidence they thought was complete, and that it could not be broken. Alfred Percy, however, discovered the nature of the fraud, and re-

gardless of the boasts and taunts of the opposite party, kept his mind carefully secret, till the moment when he came to cross-examine the witnesses ; for, as Mr. Friend had observed to him, many a cause has been lost by the impatience of Counsel, in showing, beforehand, how it might certainly be won*. By thus revealing the intended mode of attack, opportunity is given to prepare a defence, by which it may be ultimately counter-acted. In the present case, the defendant, however, came into court secure of victory, and utterly unprepared to meet the truth, which was brought out full upon him when least expected. The fact was, that he had put two pictures into the same frame, the original in front, the copy behind it—on the back of the canvass of the copy, Mr. Gresham had written his name, never suspecting that it was not the original for which he bargained, and which he thought he

* See Deinology.

actually held in his hand. The witnesses, therefore, swore literally the truth, that they saw him write upon *that* picture; and they believed the picture, on which he wrote, was the identical picture that was sent home to him. One of the witnesses was an honest man, who really believed what he swore, and knew nothing of the fraud, to which the other, a rogue in confederacy with the picture-dealer, was privy. The cross-examination of both was so ably managed, that the honest man was soon made to perceive, and the rogue forced to reveal the truth.—Alfred had reason to be proud of the credit he obtained for the ability displayed in this cross-examination, but he was infinitely more gratified by having it in his power to gain a cause for his friend, and to restore to Mr. Gresham his favorite Guido.

A welcome sight!—a letter from Godfrey! the first his family had received from him since he left England. Two of his letters, it appears, had been lost.

Alluding to one he had written immediately on hearing of the change in his father's fortune, he observes, that he has kept his resolution of living within his pay, and, after entering into some other family details, he continues as follows.

“ Now, my dear mother, prepare to hear me recant what I have said against Lord Oldborough.—I forgive his Lordship all his sins, and I begin to believe, that though he is a statesman, his heart is not yet quite *ossified*. He has recalled our regiment from this unhealthy place, and he has promoted Gascoigne to be our Lieutenant-Colonel.—I say that Lord Oldborough has done all this, because I am sure, from a hint in Alfred's last letter, that his Lordship has been the prime mover in the business.—But not to keep you in suspense about the facts.

“ In my first letter to my father, I told you, that from the moment our late lethargic Lieutenant-Colonel came

to the island, he took to drinking rum, pure rum, to waken himself—claret, port, and madeira, had lost their power over him.—Then came brandy, which he fancied was an excellent preservative against the yellow fever, and the fever of the country.—So he died ‘boldly by brandy.’——Poor fellow ! he was boasting to me, the last week of his existence, when he was literally on his death-bed, that his father taught him to drink before he was six years old, by practising him every day, after dinner, in the sublime art of carrying a bumper steadily to his lips. He moreover boasted to me, that when a boy of thirteen, at an academy, he often drank two bottles of claret at a sitting ; and that, when he went into the army, getting among a jolly set, he brought himself never to feel the worse for any quantity of wine.—I don’t know what he meant by the worse for it—at forty-five, when I first saw him, he had neither head nor hand left for himself or his country. His

hand shook so, that if he had been perishing with thirst, he could not have carried a glass to his lips, till after various attempts in all manner of curves and zigzags, spilling half of it by the way.—It was really pitiable to see him—when he was to sign his name I always went out of the room, and left Gascoigne to guide his hand.—More helpless still his mind than his body.—If his own or England's salvation had depended upon it, he could not, when in the least hurried, have uttered a distinct order, have dictated an intelligible letter, or, in time of need, have recollected the name of any one of his officers, or even his own name—quite imbecile and embruted.—But peace to his ashes! or rather to his drégs—and may there never be such another British Colonel!

“Early habits of temperance have not only saved my life, but made my life worth saving. Neither Colonel Gascoigne nor I have ever had a day's serious illness since we came to the island

—but we are the only two that have escaped. Partly from the Colonel's example, and partly from their own inclination, all the other officers have drunk hard.—Lieutenant R—— is now ill of the fever.—Captain H—— (I beg his pardon) now Major H—— will soon follow the Colonel to the grave, unless he takes my very disinterested advice and drinks less.—I am laughed at by D—— and V—— and others for this; they ask, why the deuce I can't let the Major kill himself his own way, and as fast as he pleases, when I should get on a step by it, and that step such a great one. They say none but a fool would do as I do, and I think none but a brute could do otherwise—I can't stand by with any satisfaction, and see a fellow-creature killing himself by inches, even though I have the chance of his dead shoes.—I am sure the shoes would pinch me confoundedly. If it is my brother-officers' lot to fall in battle, it's very well—I run the same hazard, he dies,

as he ought to do, a brave fellow—but to stand by, and see a man die as he ought not to do, and die what is called an *honest fellow*!—I can't do it.—H——, at first, had a great mind to run me through the body—but, poor man, he is now very fond of me, and if any one can keep him from destroying himself, I flatter myself I shall.

“A thousand thanks to dear Caroline for her letter, and to Rosamond for her journal. They, who have never been an inch from home, cannot conceive how delightful it is, at such a distance, to receive letters from our friends. You remember, in Cook's voyage, his joy, at meeting in some distant island with the spoon marked *London*.

“I hope you received my letters, Nos. 1 and 2.—Not that there was any thing particular in them. You know I never do more than tell the bare facts.—Not like Rosamond's journal—with which, by the by, Gascoigne has fallen in love. He sighs, and wishes that Heaven had

blessed him with such a sister—for *sister*, read wife.—I hope this will encourage Rosamond to write again immediately. No.—Do not tell what I have just said about Gascoigne, for,—who knows the perverse ways of women!—perhaps it might prevent her from writing to me at all. You may tell her, in general, that it is my opinion ladies always write better, and do every thing better than men—except fight,—which Heaven forbid they should ever do in public or private.

“ I am glad that Caroline did not marry Mr. Barclay, since she did not like him. But by all accounts he is a sensible, worthy man, and I give my consent to his marriage with Lady Mary Pembroke, though, from Caroline’s description, I became half in love with her myself. N. B. I have not been in love above six times since I left England, and but once any thing to signify. How does the Marchioness of Twickenham go on ?

“Affectionate duty to my father, and love to all the happy people at home.

Dear Mother,

Your affectionate Son,

G. PERCY.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

Letter from Alfred to Caroline.

“ MY DEAR CAROLINE,”

“ I AM going to surprise you—I know it is the most imprudent thing a story-teller can do, to give notice, or promise of a surprise—but you see, I have such confidence at this moment in my fact, that I hazard this imprudence—Who do you think I have seen? Guess—guess all round the breakfast table—father, mother, Caroline, Rosamond—I defy you all—Ay, Rosamond, even you, with all your capacity for romance; the romance of real life is beyond all other romances; it’s coincidences beyond the combinations of the most inventive fancy—even of yours, Rosamond—Granted—go on—Patience, ladies, if you please, and

don't turn over the page, or glance to the end of my letter to satisfy your curiosity, but read fairly on, says my father.

“ You remember, I hope, the Irishman O'Brien, to whom Erasmus was so good, and whom Mr. Gresham, kind as he always is, took for his porter—When Mr. Gresham set off last week for Amsterdam, he gave this fellow leave to go home to his wife, who lives at Greenwich. This morning, the wife came to see my Honor to speak to me, and when she did see me she could not speak, she was crying so bitterly; she was in the greatest distress about her husband; he had, she said, in going to see her, been seized by a press gang, and put on board a tender now on the Thames. Moved by the poor Irish woman's agony of grief, and helpless state, I went to Greenwich where the tender was lying, to speak to the Captain, and to offer what money might be necessary to obtain O'Brien's release. But upon my arrival there, I found that

the woman had been mistaken in every point of her story—In short, her husband ‘ was not on board the tender, had never been pressed, and had only stayed away from home the preceding night, in consequence of having met with the Captain’s servant, one of his countrymen, from the County of Leitrim dear, who had took him home to treat him, and had kept him all night to sing, ‘ St. Patrick’s day in the morning,’—and to drink a good journey, and a quick passage, across the salt-water to his master, which he could not refuse.’——I was rather provoked, to find that I had wasted my precious time and my compassion; but, as some comforting philosopher observes, no effect is ever lost, and often the little incidents, which we think unlucky, tend to the most fortunate circumstances of our lives. Whilst I was looking at my watch, and regretting my lost morning, a gentleman, whose servant had really been pressed, came up to speak to the captain, who was standing beside me.

The gentleman had something striking and noble in his whole appearance ; but his address and accent, which were those of a foreigner, did not suit the fancy of my English Captain, who, putting on the surly air, with which he thought it for his honor, and for the honor of his country to receive a Frenchman, as he took this gentleman to be, replied in the least satisfactory manner possible, and in the short language of some seamen, ‘ Your footman’s an Englishman, Sir ; has been pressed for an able-bodied seaman—which I trust he’ll prove—he’s aboard the tender—and there he will remain.’——The foreigner, who notwithstanding the politeness of his address, seemed to have a high spirit, and to be fully sensible of what was due from others to him, as well as from him to them, replied with temper and firmness. —The captain, without giving any reasons, or attending to what was said, reiterated——‘ I am under orders, Sir, I am acting according to my orders—I

can do neither more nor less. The law is as I tell you, Sir.

The foreigner bowed submission to the law, but expressed his surprise, that such should be law in a land of liberty.—With admiration he had heard, that by the English law, and British Constitution, the property and personal liberty of the lowest, the meanest subject, could not be injured or oppressed by the highest nobleman in the realm, by the most powerful minister, even by the king himself.—He had always been assured, that the king could not put his hand into the purse of the subject, or take from him to the value of a single penny; that the Sovereign could not deprive the meanest of the people unheard, untried, uncondemned, of a single hour of his liberty, or touch a hair of his head,—he had always, on the Continent, heard it the boast of Englishmen, that when even a slave touched English ground he became free; ‘yet now, to my astonishment,’ pursued the foreigner—‘what do I see?—a

freeborn British subject returning to his native land, after an absence of some years, unoffending against any law, innocent, unsuspected of all crime, a faithful domestic, an excellent man, torn from the midst of his family, dragged from *that castle his home*, put on board a king's ship, unused to hard labour, condemned to work like a galley slave, doomed to banishment, perhaps to death!—Good Heavens! In all this where is your English liberty? Where is English justice, and the spirit of your English law?

“And who the devil are you, Sir?” cried the captain, ‘who seem to know so much, and so little of English law.’—

“My name, if that be of any consequence, is Count Albert Altenberg.”

“Well, Caroline, you are surprised, —‘No,’ says Rosamond, ‘I guessed it was him, from the first moment I heard he was a foreigner, and had a noble air).’—

“Altenberg,” repeated the captain—

‘ that’s not a French name :—Why!—you are not a Frenchman !’

“ No Sir—a German.”

“ Ah, Ha !”—cried the captain, suddenly changing his tone—‘ I thought you were not a Frenchman, or you could not talk so well of English law, and feel so much for English liberty—And now then, since that’s the case, I’ll own to you frankly, that in the main I’m much of your mind,—and for my own particular share, I’d as lieve the Admiralty had sent me to Hell, as have ordered me to press on the Thames—But my business is to obey orders—which I will do by the blessing of God—So good morning to you——As to law, and justice, and all that, talk to him,’ said the Captain, pointing with his thumb over his left shoulder to me, as he walked off hastily.

“ Poor fellow !” said I—‘ this is the hardest part of a British Captain’s duty, and so he feels it.’

“ Duty,”—exclaimed the Count—

‘Duty! pardon me for repeating your word—But can it be his duty?—I hope I did not pass proper bounds in speaking to him; but now he is gone, I may say to you, Sir—to you, who if I may presume to judge from your countenance, sympathize in my feelings—this is a fitter employment for an African slave merchant, than for a British Officer—The whole scene which I have just beheld there on the river, on the banks, the violence, the struggles I have witnessed there, the screams of the women and children, it is not only horrible, but in England incredible!—Is it not like what we have heard of on the coast of Africa with detestation—What your humanity has there forbidden—abolished—And is it possible that the cries of those negroes across the Atlantic can so affect your philanthropists’ imaginations, whilst you are deaf or unmoved by these cries of your countrymen, close to your metropolis, at your very gates!—I think I hear them still’—said the Count, with a

look of unaffected horror. ‘Such a scene I never before beheld—I have seen it—and yet I cannot believe that I have seen it in England.’

“I acknowledged, that the sight was terrible; I could not be surprised, that the operation of pressing men for the sea service should strike a foreigner as inconsistent with the notion of English justice and liberty, and I admired the energy and strength of feeling which the Count showed; but I defended the measure as well as I could, on the plea of necessity.”

“Necessity!” said the Count—“pardon me if I remind you, that Necessity is the tyrant’s plea.”

“I mended my plea, and changed Necessity, into—Utility—general utility. It was essential to England’s defence—to her existence—she could not exist without her navy, and her navy could not be maintained without a press-gang—as I was assured by those who were skilled in the affairs of the Navy.”

“The Count smiled at my evident consciousness of the weakness of my concluding corollary, and observed, ‘that by my own statement, the whole argument depended on the assertions of those who maintained, that a navy could not exist without a press-gang.’—He urged this no further, and I was glad of it; his horses and mine, were at this moment up, and we both rode together to Town.—

“I know that Rosamond, at this instant, is gasping with impatience, to hear whether in the course of this ride I spoke of M. de Tourville—and the Shipwreck—I did—but not of Euphrosyne—Upon that subject I could not well touch. He had heard of the Shipwreck, and of the hospitality with which the sufferers had been treated by an English gentleman, and he was surprised and pleased, when I told him, that I was the son of that gentleman—Of M. de Tourville the Count I fancy thinks much the same as you do. He spoke of him as an in-

triguing diplomatist, of quick talents, but of a mind incapable of any thing great or generous.—The Count went on from speaking of M. de Tourville to some of the celebrated public characters abroad, and to the politics and manners of the different courts and countries of Europe. For so young a man, he has seen and reflected much. He is indeed a very superior person, as he convinced me even in this short ride. You know, that Dr. Johnson says, ‘that you cannot stand for five minutes with a great man under a shed, waiting till a shower is over, without hearing him say something, that another man could not say.’—— But though the Count conversed with me so well and so agreeably, I could see that his mind was from time to time, absent and anxious; and as we came into Town, he again spoke of the press-gang, and of his poor servant—a faithful attached servant he called him, and I am sure the Count is a good master, and a man of feeling. He had offered money

to obtain the man's release in vain. A substitute it was at this time difficult to find—The Count was but just arrived in London, had not yet presented any of his numerous letters of introduction; he mentioned the names of some of the people to whom these were addressed, and he asked me, whether application to any of them, could be of service. But none of his letters were to any of the men now in power.—Lord Oldborough was the only person I knew, whose word would be law in this case, and I offered to go with him to his Lordship.—This I ventured, my dear father, because I wisely—yes, wisely, as you shall see, calculated that the introduction of a foreigner, fresh from the Continent, and from that Court, where Cunningham Falconer is now resident Envoy, would be agreeable, and might be useful to the Minister.

“My friend Mr. Temple, who is as obliging and as much my friend now he is secretary to *the* great man, as he was

when he was a scrivener nobody in his garret, obtained audience for us directly—I need not detail—indeed I have not time—Graciously received——Count's business done by a line—Temple ordered to write to Admiralty—Lord Oldborough—seemed obliged to me for introducing the Count—I saw he wished to have some private conversation with him—rose and took my leave. Lord Oldborough—paid me for my discretion on the spot, by a kind look—a great deal from him—and following me to the door of the anti-chamber. — ‘ Mr. Percy, I cannot regret, that you have followed your own independent professional course—I congratulate you upon your success—I have heard of it from many quarters, and always, believe me, with pleasure on your father's account, and on your own.’——

“ Next day found on my table, when I came from the Courts, the Count's card—When I returned his visit, Com-

missioner Falconer was with him in close converse—confirmed by this, in opinion, that Lord Oldborough is sucking information; I mean, political secrets out of the Count—The Commissioner could not, in common decency, help being ‘exceedingly’ sorry, that he and Mrs. Falconer had seen so little of me of late—nor could he well avoid asking me to a concert, to which he invited the Count, for the ensuing evening. As the Count promised to go, so did I, on purpose to meet him.—You may be sure that I will miss no opportunity of cultivating his acquaintance, for I am entirely of my father’s opinion, that though seeking common acquaintance is absolute waste of time, yet that a man cannot employ his leisure better than in cultivating the society of those who are superior in abilities and character. Even from the glance I have had I can decide, that this Count Altenberg is a superior person, there is something about him so commanding, and yet so engaging,

..... But I will not overpraise him—
Adieu, dearest Caroline.

Most affectionately yours,

ALFRED PERCY."

To give an account of Mrs. Falconer's concert in fashionable style, we should inform the public, that Dr. Mudge for ever established his fame in "*Buds of Roses*;" and Miss La Grande was astonishing, absolutely astonishing in "*Frenar vorrei le lagrime*"—quite in Catalani's best manner—But Miss Georgiana Falconer was divine in "*O Giove Onnipotente*," and quite surpassed herself in "*Quanto O quanto è amor possente*"—In which Dr. Mudge was also capital—Indeed it would be doing injustice to this gentleman's powers not to acknowledge the universality of his genius.

Perhaps our readers may not feel quite satisfied with this general eulogium, and may observe, that all this might have been learnt from the newspapers of the day. Then we must tell things plainly

and simply, but this will not sound nearly so grand, and letting the public behind the scenes will destroy all the stage effect and illusion.—— Alfred Percy went to Mrs. Falconer's unfashionably early, in hopes that, as Count Altenberg dined there, he might have a quarter of an hour's conversation with him before the musical party should assemble. In this hope Alfred was mistaken. He found in the great drawing-room only Mrs. Falconer and two other ladies, whose names he never heard, all standing round the fire; the unknown ladies were in close and eager converse about Count Altenberg——

“ He is so handsome ! so polite ! so charming !—He is very rich—has immense possessions abroad, has not he ?—Certainly he has a fine estate in Yorkshire——But when did he come to England ?——How long does he stay ?—£15,000, no, 20,000 per annum—Indeed !—Mrs. Falconer, has not Count Altenberg £20,000 a year ?”

Mrs. Falconer, seemingly uninterested, stood silent, looking through her glass at the man who was lighting the argand lamps——

“Really, my dear,” answered she, “I can’t say . . . I know nothing of Count Altenberg . . . Take care! that argand! . . . He’s quite a stranger to us . . . the Commissioner met him at Lord Oldborough’s, and on Lord Oldborough’s account of course . . . Vigor, we must have more light, Vigor,—wishes to pay him attention——But here’s Mr. Percy,” continued she, turning to Alfred, “can, I dare say, tell you all about these things. I think the Commissioner mentioned that it was you, Mr. Percy, who introduced the Count to Lord Oldborough.”

The ladies immediately fixed their surprised and inquiring eyes upon Mr. Alfred Percy—He seemed to grow in an instant several feet in their estimation: but he shrunk again when he acknowledged, that he had merely met Count

Altenberg accidentally at Greenwich—that he knew nothing of the Count's estate in Yorkshire, or of his foreign possessions, and was utterly incompetent to decide whether he had £10,000. or 20,000 per annum.

“That's very odd,” said one of the ladies—But this much, I know, that he is passionately fond of music, for he told me so at dinner.”

“Then I am sure he will be charmed to night with Miss Georgiana”—said the confidants.

“But what signifies that,” replied the other lady, “if he has not . . .”

“Mr. Percy!” interrupted Mrs. Falconer, “I have never seen you since that sad affair of Lady Harriot H—— and Lewis Clay;” and putting her arm within Alfred's, she walked him away, talking over the affair, and throwing in a proper proportion of compliment. As she reached the folding doors, at the farthest end of the room, she opened them.

“ I have a notion the young people are here”——She introduced him into the music room. Miss Georgiana Falconer, at the piano-forte, with performers, composers, masters, and young ladies, all with music-books round her, sat high in consultation, which Alfred’s appearance interrupted——a faint struggle to be civil——An insipid question or two was addressed to him——

“ Fond of music, Mr. Percy?——Captain Percy, I think, likes music?——You expect Captain Percy home soon?”——

Scarcely listening to his answers, the young ladies soon resumed their own conversation, forgot his existence, and went on eagerly with their own affairs.

As they turned over their music-books, Alfred, for some minutes, heard only the names of La Tour, Winter, Von Esch, Lenza, Portugallo, Mortellari, Guglielmi, Sacchini, Sarti, Paisiello, pronounced by male and female voices in various tones of ecstasy and of execra-

tion. Then there was an eager search for certain favorite duets, trios, and sets of *cavatinas*. Next he heard, in rapid succession, the names of Tenducci, Pachierotti, Marchesi, Vieganoni, Braham, Gabrielli, Mara, Banti, Grassini, Billington, Catalani. Imagine our young barrister's sense of his profound ignorance, whilst he heard the merits of all dead and living composers, singers, and masters, decided upon by the Miss Falconers. By degrees he began to see a little through the palpable obscure, by which he had at first felt himself surrounded; he discerned that he was in a committee of the particular friends of the Miss Falconers, who were settling what they should sing and play. All, of course, were flattering the Miss Falconers, and abusing their absent friends, those especially who were expected to bear a part in this concert—For instance——“Those two eternal Miss Byngs, with voices like cracked bells,

and with their old-fashioned music, Handel, Corelli, and Pergolese, horrid! — And odious little Miss Crotch, who has science but no taste, execution but no judgment—Then her voice!—How people can call it fine!—powerful if you will—but overpowering!—For my part I can't stand it, can you?—Every body knows an artificial shake, when good, is far superior to a natural shake —As to the Miss Barhams, the eldest has no more ear than the table, and the youngest such a thread of voice!”—

“But, Mamma,” interrupted Miss Georgiana Falconer, “are the Miss La Grandes to be here to night?”

“Certainly, my dear, you know I could not avoid asking the Miss La Grandes.”—

“Then, positively,” cried Miss Georgiana, her whole face changing, and ill humor swelling in every feature—

“Then, positively, ma'am, I can't, and won't sing a note!”—

“ Why, my dear love,” said Mrs. Falconer, “ surely you don’t pretend to be afraid of the Miss La Grandes.”

“ You!”—cried one of the chorus of flatterers—“ You! to whom the La Grandes are no more to be compared!...”

“ Not but that they certainly sing finely, I am told,” said Mrs. Falconer, “ yet I can’t say I like their style of singing,—and knowledge of music, you know, they don’t pretend to.”

“ Why! that’s true,” said Miss Georgiana, “ but still, somehow, I can never bring out my voice before those girls—If I have any voice at all, it is in the lower part, and Miss La Grande always chooses the lower part—Besides, Ma’am, you know she regularly takes ‘ *O Giove Omnipotente*’ from me—But I should not mind *that* even, if she would not attempt poor ‘ *Quanto Oh quanto è amor possente*’—There’s no standing that! Now, really, to hear that so spoiled by Miss La Grande.”

“ Hush! my dear,” said Mrs. Fal-

coner, just as Mrs. La Grande appeared——“ Oh! my good Mrs. La Grande, how kind is this of you to come to me with your poor head!—And Miss La Grande and Miss Eliza——We are so much obliged to you, for you know that we could not have done without you.”

The Miss La Grandes were soon followed by the Miss Barhams and Miss Crotch, and they were all “ *so good, and so kind, and such dear creatures*”——But after the first forced compliments, silence and reserve spread among the young ladies of the Miss Falconers’ party. It was evident, that the fair professors were mutually afraid and envious of each other, and there was little prospect of harmony of temper at this concert.——At length the gentlemen arrived—Count Altenberg appeared, and came up to pay his compliments to the Miss Falconers. As he had not been behind the scenes, all was charming illusion to his eyes.—No one could appear more good-humored, agreeable, and amiable

than Miss Georgiana Falconer ; she was in delightful spirits, well dressed, and admirably supported by her mother. The concert began. But who can describe the anxiety of the rival mothers, each in agonies to have their daughters brought forward and exhibited to the best advantage. Some grew pale, some red, all according to their different powers of self-command, and address endeavored to conceal their feelings. Mrs. Falconer now shone superior in ease inimitable. She appeared absolutely unconcerned for her own daughter, quite intent upon bringing into notice the talents of the Miss Barhams, Miss Crotch, the Miss La Grandes, &c.

These young ladies in their turn knew and practised the various arts, by which at a musical party the unfortunate mistress of the house may be tormented. Some, who were sensible that the company were anxious for their performance, chose to be "*quite out of voice*," till they had been pressed and flattered into acquiescence ;

one sweet bashful creature must absolutely be forced to the instrument, as a new Speaker of the House of Commons was formerly dragged to the chair. Then the instrument was not what one young lady was *used to*; the lights were so placed, that another who was near-sighted could not see a note—another could not endure such a glare. One could not sing unless the windows were all open—another could not play unless they were all shut. With perfect complaisance Mrs. Falconer ordered the windows to be opened and shut, and again opened and shut; with admirable patience she was, or seemed to be, the martyr to the caprices of the fair musicians. While all the time she so manœuvred as to divide, and govern, and finally to have every thing arranged as she pleased. None but a perfectly cool stander-by, and one previously acquainted with Mrs. Falconer's character, could have seen all that Alfred saw. Perhaps the interest he began to take about Count Altenberg,

who was the grand object of all her operations, increased his penetration. While the Count was engaged in earnest political conversation in one of the inner rooms with the Commissioner, Mrs. Falconer besought the Miss La Grandes to favor the company. It was impossible for them to resist her polite entreaties. Next she called upon Miss Crotch, and the Miss Barhams, and she contrived, that they should sing and play, and play and sing, till they had exhausted the admiration and complaisance of the auditors. Then she relieved attention with some slight things from Miss Arabella Falconer, such as could excite no *sensation* or envy. Presently, after walking about the room, carelessly joining different conversation parties, and saying something obliging to each, she approached the Count and the Commissioner. Finding that the Commissioner had finished all he had to say, she began to reproach him for keeping the Count so long from the ladies, and leading him, as she spoke, to the piano-forte, she de-

clared, that he had missed such charming things.—“ She *could* not ask Miss Crotch to play any more, till she had rested—Georgiana! for want of something better, do try what you can give us—she will appear to great disadvantage of course—My dear, I think we have not had *O Giove Omnipotente*.”

“ I am not equal to that, Ma’am,” said Georgiana, drawing back, “ you should call upon Miss La Grande.”

“ True, my love, but Miss La Grande has been so very obliging, I could not ask Try it, my love—I am not surprised you should be diffident after what we have heard but the Count, I am sure, will make allowances.”

With amiable and becoming diffidence Miss Georgiana was compelled to comply—The Count was surprised and charmed by her voice—Then she was prevailed upon to try “ *Quanto O quanto è amor possente*”—The Count, who was enthusiastically fond of music, seemed quite enchanted, and Mrs. Falconer

took care, that he should have this impression left full and strong upon his mind—Supper was announced—The Count was placed at the table between Mrs. Falconer and Mrs. John Falconer; but just as they were sitting down, Mrs. Falconer called to Georgiana, who was going, much against her will, to another table.

“ Take my place, my dear Georgiana, for you know I never eat supper.”

Georgiana's countenance, which had been black as night, became all radiant instantly. She took her mamma's place beside the Count. Mrs. Falconer walked about all supper time smiling, and saying obliging things with self-satisfied grace. She had reason indeed to be satisfied with the success of this night's operations. Never once did she appear to look towards the Count, or her daughter, but assuredly she saw that things were going on as she wished.

In the mean time Alfred Percy was as heartily tired by the exhibitions of this

evening, as were many fashionable young men, who had been loud in their praises of the performers. Perhaps Alfred was not however a perfectly fair judge, as he was disappointed in his own manœuvres, not having been able to obtain two minutes' conversation with the Count during the whole evening. In a letter to Rosamond, the next day, he said, that Mrs. Falconer's concert had been very dull, and he observed that

“ People can see more of one another in a single day in the country, than they can in a year in town.” He was further very eloquent “ on the folly of meeting in crowds to say commonplace nothings to people you do not care for, and to see only the outsides of those with whom you desire to converse.”

“ Just as I was writing this sentence,” continues Alfred,—“ Count Altenberg called—how fortunate—how obliging of him to come so early, before I went to the courts. He has put me

into good humor again with the whole world—even with the Miss Falconers—He came to take leave of me—He is going down to the country—with whom do you think?—With Lord Oldborough, during the recess. Did I not tell you, that Lord Oldborough would like him—that is, would find that he has information, and can be useful.—I hope you will all see the Count; indeed I am sure you will. He politely spoke of paying his respects to my father, by whom his shipwrecked countrymen had been so hospitably succoured in their distress—I told him, that our family no longer lived in the same place; that we had been obliged to retire to a small estate, in a distant part of the county—I did not trouble him with the history of our family misfortunes; nor did I even mention how the shipwreck, and the carelessness of the Dutch sailors had occasioned the fire at Percy Hall—though I was tempted to tell him this when I was speaking of M. de Tourville.

“ I forgot to tell my father, that this morning, when I went with the Count to Lord Oldborough’s, among a heap of books of heraldry, with which his table was covered, I spied an old book of my father’s on the *arte* of deciphering, which he had lent Commissioner Falconer years ago. Lord Oldborough, whose eye is quick as a hawk’s, saw my eye turn towards it, and he asked me if I knew any thing of that book, or of the art of deciphering—Nothing of the art, but something of the book, which I recollected to be my father’s—His Lordship put it into my hands, and I showed some pencil notes of my father’s writing.—Lord Oldborough seemed surprised—and said, he did not know this had been among the number of your studies—I told him, that you had once been much intent upon Wilkins and Leibnitz’s scheme of a universal language, and that I believed this had led you to the art of deciphering—He repeated the words ‘ Universal language’—Ha !—

Then I suppose it was from Mr. Percy, that Commissioner Falconer learnt all he knew on this subject'—

“ I believe so, my Lord’—

“ Ha !’——He seemed lost for a moment in thought, and then added—‘ I wish I had known this sooner—Ha !’

“ What these *Haes* meant, I was unable to decipher—but I am sure they related to some matter very interesting to him——He explained himself no further, but immediately turned away from me to the Count, and began to talk of the affairs of his court, and of M. de Tourville, of whom he seems to have some knowledge I suppose through the means of his envoy, Cunningham Falconer.

“ I understand, that a prodigious party is invited to Falconer-Court. The Count asked me if I was to be one of them, and seemed to wish it—I like him much——They are to have balls, and plays, and great doings—If I have time I will write *to morrow*, and tell you who goes, and give you a sketch of their cha-

racters—Mrs. Falconer cannot well avoid asking you to some of her entertainments, and it will be pleasant to you to know who's who beforehand."

CHAPTER XXIV.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the *patronage of fashion*, which the Miss Falconers had for some time enjoyed, notwithstanding all their own accomplishments, and their mother's knowledge of the world and address, the grand object had not been obtained—for they were not married.—Though every where seen, and every where admired, no proposals had yet been made adequate to their expectations. In vain had one young nobleman after another, heir apparent after heir apparent been invited, cherished, and flattered, by Mrs. Falconer, had been constantly at her balls and concerts, had stood beside the harp, and the piano forte, had danced, or flirted with the Miss Falconers, had been hung out at all public places as a pendant to one or other of the sisters.

“ The mother, seeing project after project fail for the establishment of her daughters, forced to bear, and to conceal these disappointments, still continued to form new schemes with indefatigable perseverance. Yet every season the difficulty increased ; and Mrs. Falconer in the midst of the life of pleasure, which she seemed to lead, was a prey to perpetual anxiety. She knew that if any thing should happen to the Commissioner, whose health was declining ; if he should lose Lord Oldborough’s favor, which seemed not impossible ; if Lord Oldborough should not be able to maintain himself in power, or if he should die ; she and her daughters would lose every thing.— From a small estate, overwhelmed with debt, there would be no fortune for her daughters, they would be left utterly destitute, and absolutely unable to do any thing for themselves—unlikely to suit plain country gentlemen, after the high style of company, in which they had lived, and still more incapable than she

would be of bearing a reverse of fortune. The young ladies, confident of their charms, unaccustomed to reflect, and full of the present, thought little of these probabilities of future evil, though they were quite as impatient to be married as their mother could wish. Indeed, this impatience becoming visible, she was rather anxious to suppress it, because it counteracted her views.—Mrs. Falconer had still two schemes for their establishment. Sir Robert Percy had luckily lost his wife within the last twelvemonth, had no children, and had been heard to declare, that he would marry again as soon as he decently could, because, if he were to die without heirs, the Percy estate might revert to the relations whom he detested. Mrs. Falconer had persuaded the Commissioner to cultivate Sir Robert Percy's acquaintance; had this winter watched for the time when law business called him to town; had prevailed upon him to go to her house, instead of staying, as he usually did, at an hotel, or spending

his day at his Solicitor's chambers. She had in short made things so agreeable to him, and he seemed so well pleased with her, she had hopes that he would in time be brought to propose for her daughter, Arabella. To conciliate Sir Robert Percy, it was necessary to avoid all connexion with *the other Percies*, and it was for this reason, that the Commissioner had of late avoided Alfred and Erasmus. Mrs. Falconer's schemes for Georgiana, her beautiful daughter, were far more brilliant.—Several great establishments she had in view.—The appearance of Count Altenberg put many old visions to flight—her whole fancy fixed upon him.—If she could marry her Georgiana to Count Altenberg!—There would be a match, high as her most exalted ambition could desire: and this project did not seem impossible. The Count had been heard to say, that he thought Miss Georgiana Falconer the handsomest woman he had seen since he had been in London.—He had admired her dancing, and had listened with en-

thusiastic attention to her music, and to her charming voice; the young lady herself was confident, that he was, would be, or ought to be her slave. The Count was going into the country for some weeks with Lord Oldborough.—Mrs. Falconer, though she had not seen Falconer-Court for fifteen years, decided to go there immediately. Then she should have the Count fairly away from all the designing mothers, and rival daughters, of her acquaintance, and besides she might, by this seasonable visit to the country, secure Sir Robert Percy for her daughter Arabella. The Commissioner rejoiced in his lady's determination, because he knew that it would afford him an opportunity of obliging Lord Oldborough. His Lordship had always been averse to the trouble of entertaining company. He disliked it still more, since the death of Lady Oldborough, but he knew that it was necessary to keep up his interest, and his popularity, in the country, and he would, therefore, be obliged by Mrs.

Falconer's giving dinners and entertainments for him. This game had succeeded, when it had been played—at the time of the Marchioness of Twickenham's marriage.—Mr. Falconer was particularly anxious now to please Lord Oldborough, for he was fully aware, that he had lost ground with his patron, and that his sons had all in different ways given his Lordship cause of dissatisfaction. With Buckhurst Falconer Lord Oldborough was displeased for being the companion and encourager of his nephew, Colonel Hauton, in extravagance and gaming. In paying his court to the nephew, Buckhurst lost the uncle. Lord Oldborough had hoped, that a man of literature and talents, as Buckhurst had been represented to him, would have drawn his nephew from the turf to the senate, and would have raised in Colonel Hauton's mind some noble ambition.

“A clergyman ! Sir,” said Lord Oldborough to Commissioner Falconer, with a look of austere indignation, “What

could induce such a man as Mr. Buckhurst Falconer to become a clergyman?" The Commissioner, affecting to sympathize in this indignation, declared that he was so angry with his son, that he would not see him.—All the time, however, he comforted himself with the hope, that his son would, in a few months, be in possession of the long-expected living of Chipping Friars, as the old incumbent was now speechless.—Lord Oldborough had never, after this disowning of Buckhurst, mentioned his name to the father, and the Commissioner thought this management had succeeded.

Of John Falconer too there had been complaints.—Officers returned from abroad had spoken of his stupidity, his neglect of duty, and, above all, of his boasting that, let him do what he pleased, he was sure of Lord Oldborough's favor—certain of being a Major in one year, a Lieutenant-Colonel in two.—At first his boasts had been laughed at by his brother officers, but when, at the year's end,

he actually was made a Major, his brother officers' surprise and discontent were great.—Lord Oldborough was blamed for patronizing such a fellow.—All this, in course of time, came to his Lordship's knowledge.—He heard these complaints in silence. It was not his habit suddenly to express his displeasure. He heard, and saw, without speaking or acting, till facts and proofs had accumulated in his mind. He seemed to pass over many things unobserved, but they were all registered in his memory, and he would judge and decide at last in an instant, and irrevocably.—Of this Commissioner Falconer, a cunning man, who watched parts of a character narrowly, but could not take in the whole, was not aware. He often blessed his good fortune for having escaped Lord Oldborough's displeasure, or detection, upon occasions when his Lordship had marked all that the Commissioner imagined he had overlooked; his Lordship was often most awake to what was passing, and most displeas-

ed, when he appeared most absent or unmoved.

For instance, many mistakes, and much ignorance, had frequently appeared in his Envoy Cunningham Falconer's despatches; but except when, in the first moment of surprise at the difference between the ineptitude of the Envoy, and the talents of the author of the pamphlet, his Lordship had exclaimed,—“*A slovenly despatch*,”—these mistakes, and this ignorance, had passed without animadversion. Some symptoms of duplicity, some evasion of the minister's questions, had likewise appeared, and the Commissioner had trembled lest the suspicions of his patron should be awakened.

Count Altenberg, without design to injure Cunningham, had accidentally mentioned in the presence of the Commissioner, and of Lord Oldborough, something of a transaction, which was to be kept a profound secret from the minister, a private intrigue which Cunningham had been carrying on, to get himself

appointed Envoy to the Court of Denmark, by the interest of the opposite party, in case of a change of ministry.—At the moment when this was alluded to by Count Altenberg, the Commissioner was so dreadfully alarmed, that he perspired at every pore; but perceiving that Lord Oldborough expressed no surprise, asked no explanation, never looked towards him with suspicion, nor even raised his eyes, Mr. Falconer flattered himself, that his Lordship was so completely engrossed in the operation of replacing a loose glass in his spectacles, that he had not heard or noticed one word the Count had said. In this hope the Commissioner was confirmed by Lord Oldborough's speaking an instant afterwards precisely in his usual tone, and pursuing his previous subject of conversation, without any apparent interruption in the train of his ideas.—Yet, notwithstanding that the Commissioner fancied, that he and his son had escaped, and were secure in each particular instance, he had a general

feeling, that Lord Oldborough was more reserved towards him; and he was haunted by a constant fear of losing, not his patron's esteem, or confidence, but his favor.—Against this danger he constantly guarded. To flatter, to keep Lord Oldborough in good humor, to make himself agreeable and necessary by continual petty submissions and services, was the sum of his policy.

It was with this view, that the Commissioner determined to go to the country; and with this view he had consented to various expenses, which were necessary, as Mrs. Falconer declared, to make it practicable for her and her daughters to accompany him. Orders were sent to have a theatre at Falconer-Court, which had been long disused, fitted up in the most elegant manner.—The Miss Falconers had been in the habit of acting at Sir Thomas and Lady Flowerton's private theatre at Richmond, and they were accomplished actresses. Count Altenberg had declared, that he was particular-

ly fond of theatrical amusements.—That hint was sufficient.—Besides, what a sensation the opening of a theatre at Falconer-Court would create in the county!—Mrs. Falconer observed, that the only possible way to make the country supportable was to have a large party of town friends in your house—and this was the more necessary for her, as she was almost a stranger in her own county.

Alfred kept his promise, and sent Rosamond a list of the persons of whom the party was to consist.—Opposite to several names he wrote—commonplace young—or, commonplace old ladies;—of the latter number were Lady Frant and Lady Kew. Of the former were the Miss G—s, and others not worth mentioning.—Then came the two Lady Arlingtons, nieces of the Duke of Greenwich.

“The Lady Arlingtons,” continues Alfred, “are glad to get to Mrs. Falconer, and Mrs. Falconer is glad to have them, because they are related to my Lord Duke. I have met them at Mrs.

Falconer's, at Lady Angelica Headingham's, and often at Lady Jane Granville's.—The style and tone of the Lady Anne is languishing—of Lady Frances, lively—both seem mere spoilt selfish ladies of quality. Lady Anne's selfishness is of the cold, chronic, inveterate nature.—Lady Frances's, of the hot, acute, and tormenting species.—She 'loves every thing by fits, and nothing long.'—Every body is *an angel*, and *a dear creature*, while they minister to her fancies—and no longer.—About these fancies she is restless and impatient to a degree, which makes her sister look sick and scornful beyond description.—Lady Anne neither fancies, nor loves any thing, or any body.—She seems to have no object upon Earth, but to drink barley-water, and save herself from all manner of trouble or exertion, bodily or mental.—So much for the Lady Arlingtons.

“ Buckhurst Falconer cannot be of this party—Colonel Hauton has him at his regiment.—But Buckhurst's two friends,

the Clays, are earnestly pressed into the service. Notwithstanding the fine sanctified speech Mrs. Falconer made me, about *that sad affair of Lewis Clay with Lady Harriot H——*, she invites him; and I have a notion, if Count Altenberg had not appeared, that she would like to have had him, or his brother, for her son-in-law. That you may judge how much my mother would like them for her sons-in-law, I will take the trouble to draw you portraits of both gentlemen.

“ *French Clay*, and *English Clay*, as they have been named, are brothers, both men of large fortune, which their father acquired respectably by commerce, and which they are spending in all kinds of extravagance and profligacy, not from inclination, but merely to purchase admission into fine company.—*French Clay* is a travelled coxcomb, who, *à propos de bottes*, begins with—
‘ When I was abroad with the Princess Orbitella . . . ’ But I am afraid I cannot speak of this man with impartiality,

for I cannot bear to see an Englishman apeing a Frenchman.—The imitation is always so awkward, so ridiculous, so contemptible. French Clay talks of *tact*, but without possessing any; he delights in what he calls *persiflage*, but in his *persiflage*, instead of the wit and elegance of Parisian raillery, there appears only the vulgar love and habit of derision.—He is continually railing at our English want of *savoir vivre*, yet is himself an example of the ill-breeding which he reprobates. His manners have neither the cordiality of an Englishman, nor the polish of a foreigner. To improve us in *l'esprit de société*, he would introduce the whole system of French gallantry—the vice without the refinement.—I heard him acknowledge it to be ‘his principle’ to intrigue with every *married* woman who would listen to him, provided she has any one of his four requisites, wit, fashion, beauty, or a good table.—He says his late suit in

Doctors' Commons cost him nothing; for £10,000 are nothing to him.

“ Public virtue, as well as private, he thinks it a fine air to disdain,—and patriotism and love of our country he calls prejudices, of which a philosopher ought to divest himself.—Some charitable people say, that he is not so unfeeling as he seems to be, and that above half his vices arise from affectation, and from a mistaken ambition to be, what he thinks perfectly French.

“ His brother, English Clay, is a cold, reserved, proud, dull looking man, whom art, in despite of nature, strove, and strove in vain, to quicken into a ‘gay deceiver.’—He is a grave man of pleasure—his first care being to provide for his exclusively personal gratifications. His dinner is a serious, solemn business, whether it be at his own table, or at a tavern, which last he prefers—he orders it so, that his repast shall be the very best of it's kind that money can pro-

cure. His next care is, that he be not cheated in what he is to pay. Not that he values money, but he cannot bear to be *taken in*. Then his dress, his horses, his whole appointment and establishment, are complete, and accurately in the fashion of the day—no expense spared.—All that belongs to Mr. Clay, of Clay-Hall, is the best of it's kind, or, at least, *had from the best hand* in England. Every thing about him is English; but I don't know whether this arises from love of his country, or contempt of his brother. English Clay is not ostentatious of that which is his own, but he is disdainful of all that belongs to another. The slightest deficiency in the *appointments* of his companions he sees, and marks by a wink to some by-stander, or with a dry joke laughs the wretch to scorn. In company, he delights to sit by silent and snug, sneering inwardly at those who are entertaining the company, and *committing* themselves. He never entertains, and is seldom entertained.

His joys are neither convivial nor intellectual; he is gregarious, but not companionable; a hard drinker, but not social. Wine sometimes makes him noisy, but never makes him gay; and, whatever be his excesses, he commits them seemingly without temptation from taste or passion. He keeps a furiously expensive mistress, whom he curses, and who curses him, as Buckhurst informs me, ten times a day; yet he prides himself on being free and unmarried! scorning and dreading women in general, 'he swears he would not marry Venus herself unless she had £100,000 in each pocket, and now, that no mortal Venus wears pockets, he thanks Heaven he is safe.—Buckhurst, I remember, assured me, that beneath this crust of pride there is some good nature. Deep hid under a large mass of selfishness, there may be some glimmerings of affection. He shows symptoms of feeling for his horses, and his mother, and his coachman, and his country. I do believe he would fight

for old England, for it is his country, and he is English Clay.—Affection for his coachman did I say?—He shows admiration, if not affection, for every whip of note in town. He is their companion . . . no, their pupil, and, as Antoninus Pius gratefully prided himself in recording the names of those relations and friends from whom he learnt his several virtues, this man may boast to after ages of having learnt how to cut a fly off his near leader's ear from one coachman, how to tuck up a duck from another, and the *true spit* from a third—by the by, it is said, but I don't vouch for the truth of the story, that this last accomplishment cost him a tooth, which he had had drawn to attain it in perfection.—Pure *slang* he could not learn from any one coachman, but from constantly frequenting the society of all. I recollect Buckhurst Falconer's telling me, that he dined once with English Clay, in company with a baronet, a viscount, an earl, a duke, and the driver

of a mail-coach, to whom was given, by acclamation, the seat of honor. I am told there is a house, at which these gentlemen and noblemen meet regularly every week, where there are two dining-rooms divided by glass doors.—In one room the real coachmen dine, in the other the amateur gentlemen, who, when they are tired of their own conversation, throw open the glass-doors, that they may be entertained and edified by the coachmen's wit and *slang*; in which dialect English Clay's rapid proficiency has, it is said, recommended him to the *best* society, even more than his being the master of the best of cooks, and of Clay-Hall.

“ I have said so much more than I intended of both these brothers, that I have no room for more portraits, indeed, the other gentlemen are zeroes.

* * * * *

Yours affectionately,

ALFRED PERCY.”

Notwithstanding the pains which Mrs. Falconer took to engage these Mr. Clays to accompany her, she could obtain only a promise, that they would wait upon her, if possible, some time during the recess.

Count Altenberg also, much to Mrs. Falconer's disappointment, was detained in town a few days longer than he had foreseen, but he promised to follow Lord Oldborough early in the ensuing week. All the rest of the *prodigious* party arrived at Falconer-Court, which was within a few miles of Lord Oldborough's seat at Clermont-Park.

The day after Lord Oldborough's arrival in the country, his Lordship was seized with a fit of the gout, which fixed in his right hand. Commissioner Falconer, when he came in the morning to pay his respects, and to inquire after his patron's health, found him in his study, writing a letter with his left hand.—
“My Lord, shall not I call Mr. Temple

—or—could I offer my services as secretary?”—“I thank you, Sir—no.—This letter must be written with my own hand.”

Who can this letter be to, that is of so much consequence? thought the Commissioner; and glancing his eye at the direction, he saw, as the letter was given to a servant, “*To L. Percy, Esq.*”—his surprise arrested the pinch of snuff which he was just going to take.—“What could be the business—the secret—only a few lines, what could they contain?”—

Simply these words:

“MY DEAR SIR,

I write to you with my left hand, the gout having, within these few hours, incapacitated my right.—Since this gout keeps me a prisoner, and I cannot, as I had intended, go to you, may I beg that you will do me the favor to come to me, if it could suit your con-

venience, to morrow morning, when I shall be alone from twelve till four.

With true esteem,

Yours,

OLDBOROUGH."

In the course of the day, the Commissioner found out, by something Lord Oldborough *let fall*, what his Lordship had no intention to conceal, that he had requested Mr. Percy to come to Clermont-Park the next morning. And the Commissioner promised himself that he would be in the way to see his good cousin Percy, and to satisfy his curiosity. But his manœuvres and windings were, whenever it was necessary, counteracted and cut short by the unexpected directness and peremptory plain dealing of his patron. In the morning, towards the hour of twelve, the Commissioner thought he had well begun a conversation, that would draw out into length upon a topic, which he knew must be interesting to his Lordship, and he held

in his hand private letters of great consequence from his son Cunningham; but Lord Oldborough taking the letters, locked them up in his desk, saying,

“To night I will read them—this morning I have set apart for a conversation with Mr. Percy, whom I wish to see alone. In the mean time my interest in the Borough—has been left too much to the care of that attorney Sharpe, of whom I have no great opinion. Will you be so good to ride over, as you promised me that you would, to the Borough, and see what is doing there.”

The Commissioner endeavored not to look disconcerted or discomfited, rang the bell for his horses, and took his leave, as Lord Oldborough had determined that he should, before the arrival of Mr. Percy, who came exactly at twelve.

“I thank you for this punctuality, Mr. Percy,” said Lord Oldborough, advancing in his most gracious manner—and no two things could be more

strikingly different, than his gracious and ungracious manner.—"I thank you for this kind punctuality. No one knows better than I do the difference between the visit of a friend, and all other visits."——

Without preface, Lord Oldborough always went directly to the point.—"I have requested you to come to me, Mr. Percy, because I want from you two things, which I cannot have so much to my satisfaction from any other person as from you,—assistance—and sympathy.—But, before I go to my own affairs, let me—and not by way of compliment, but, plainly and truly, let me congratulate you, my dear Sir, on the success of your sons, on the distinction and independence they have already acquired in their professions.—I know the value of independence—of that which I shall never have,"—added his Lordship, with a forced smile and a deep sigh.—

"But let that be.—It was not of that

I meant to speak.—You pursue your course, I mine.—Firmness of purpose I take to be the great difference between man and man. I am not one of those, who habitually covet sympathy. It is a sign of a mind insufficient to it's own support, to look for sympathy on every trivial occurrence,—and on great occasions, it has not been my good fortune to meet many persons, who could sympathize with me.”

“ True,” said Mr. Percy, “ people must think with you, before they can feel with you.”

“ It is extraordinary, Mr. Percy,” continued Lord Oldborough, “ that, knowing how widely you differ from me in political principles, I should choose, of all men living, to open my mind to you.—But the fact is, that I am convinced, however we may differ about the means, the end we both have in view is one and the same,—The good and glory of the British Empire.”

“ My Lord, I believe it,”—cried Mr. Percy—With energy and warmth he repeated—“ My Lord, I believe it.”

“ I thank you, Sir,”—said Lord Oldborough, “ you do me justice. I have reason to be satisfied, when such men as you do me justice. I have reason also to be satisfied, that I have not to make the common complaint of those, who serve princes. From him whom I have served I have not met with any ingratitude, with any neglect. On the contrary, I am well assured, that so firm is his conviction of my intending the good of his throne, and of his people, that to preserve me his minister is the first wish of his heart. I am confident, that without hesitation he would dismiss from his counsels any who should obstruct my views, or be inimical to my interests.”

“ Then, my Lord, you are happy ; if man can be happy at the summit of ambition.”—

“ Pardon me. It is a dizzy height at best.—But—were it attained, I trust my head would be strong enough to bear it.”

“ Lord Verulam you know, my Lord,” said Mr. Percy, smiling, “ tells us, that people, by looking down precipices, do put their spirits in the act of falling.”

“ True, true,” said Lord Oldborough, rather impatient at Mr. Percy’s going to Lord Verulam and philosophy.—“ But you have not yet heard the facts.—I am encompassed with enemies, open and secret.—Open enemies I meet and defy—their strength I can calculate and oppose.—But the strength of my secret enemies I cannot calculate, for that strength depends on their combination, and that combination I cannot break, till I know of what it consists. I have the power and the will to strike, but know not where to aim. In the dark I will not strike, lest I injure the innocent or destroy a friend.—Light I cannot ob-

tain, though I have been in search of it for a considerable time. Perhaps, by your assistance it may be obtained."

"By my assistance!" exclaimed Mr. Percy—"ignorant, as I am, of all parties, and of all their secret transactions, how, my dear Lord, can I possibly afford you any assistance?"

"Precisely by your being unconnected with all parties—a cool stander by, you can judge of the play—you can assist me with your general knowledge of human nature, and with a particular species of knowledge, of which I should never have guessed that you were possessed, but for an accidental discovery of it made to me the other day by your son Alfred. Your knowledge of the art of deciphering."

Lord Oldborough then produced the Tourville papers, related how they had been put into his hands by Commissioner Falconer, showed him what the Commissioner and his son had deciphered, pointed out where the remaining diffi-

culty occurred, and explained how they were completely at a stand, from their inability to decipher the word *Gassoc*, or to decide who or what it could mean. All the conjectures of the Commissioner, the *cassoc*, and the bishop, and the *gosshawk*, and the heraldic researches, and the French misnomers, and the puns upon the coats of arms, and the notes from Wilkins on universal language, and an old book on deciphering, which had been lent the Commissioner, and the private and public letters, which Cunningham had written since he went abroad, were all laid before Mr. Percy.

“As to my Envoy, Mr. Cunningham Falconer,” said Lord Oldborough, as he took up the bundle of Cunningham’s letters—“I do not choose to interrupt the main business before us, by adverting to him or to his character, further, than to point out to you this mark, (showing a peculiar pencil mark, made on certain papers).—This is my note of distrust, observe, and this my note for mere cir-

cumlocution—or nonsense.—And here,” continued his Lordship, “is a list of all those in, or connected with the ministry, whom it is possible may be my enemies.”—The list was the same as that on which the Commissioner formerly went to work, except that the name of the Duke of Greenwich had been struck out, and two others added in his place, so that it stood thus,

“Dukes of Doncaster, and Stratford—Lords Coleman, Naresby, Skreene, Twisselton, Waltham, Wrexfield, Chelsea, and Lancaster, Sir Thomas Cope, Sir James Skipworth, Secretaries Arnold and Oldfield.” This list was marked with figures, in different colored inks, prefixed to each name, denoting the degrees of their supposed enmity to Lord Oldborough, and these had been calculated from a paper, containing notes of the probable causes and motives of their disaffection, drawn up by Commissioner Falconer, but corrected, and in many places contradicted, by notes in Lord

Oldborough's hand-writing. His Lordship marked which was *his* calculation of probabilities, and made some observations on the character of each, as he read over the list of names rapidly.

Doncaster, a dunce—Stratford, a miser—Coleman, a knave—Naresby, non-compos—Skreene, the most corrupt of the corrupt—Twisselton, puzzle-headed—Waltham, a mere theorist—Wrexfield, a speechifier—Chelsea, a trimmer—Lancaster, deep and dark—Sir Thomas Cope, a wit, a poet, and a fool—Sir James Skipworth, finance and finesse—Arnold, able and active; and Oldfield, a diplomatist in grain.

“And is this the summary of the history of the men, with whom your Lordship is obliged to act and live?” said Mr. Percy.

“It is—I am—But, my dear Sir, do not let us fly off at a tangent to morality or philosophy.—These have nothing to do with the present purpose.—You have before you all the papers relative to

this transaction.—Now, will you do me the favor, the service to look them over, and try whether you can make out *le mot d'énigme*.—I shall not disturb you."

Lord Oldborough sat down at a small table by the fire, with a packet of letters and memorials beside him, and in a few minutes was completely absorbed in these, for he had acquired the power of turning his attention suddenly and entirely from one subject to another.

Without reading the mass of Commissioner Falconer's explanations and conjectures, or encumbering his understanding with all that Cunningham had collected, as if purposely to puzzle the cause, Mr. Percy, examined first very carefully the original documents—then Lord Oldborough's notes on the views and characters of the suspected persons, and the reasons of their several enmities, or dissatisfaction. From the scale of probabilities, which he found had been with great ability calculated on these

notes, he selected the principal names, and then tried with these, whether he could make out an idea, that had struck him the moment he had heard of the Gassoc. He recollected the famous word Cabal, in the reign of Charles the Second, and he thought it possible, that the cabalistical word Gassoc might be formed by a similar combination.—But *Gassoc* was no English word, was no word of any language.—Upon close examination of the Tourville papers, he perceived that the Commissioner had been right in one of his suggestions, that the *G* had been written instead of a *C*: in some places it had been a *c* turned into a *g*, and the writer seemed to be in doubt whether the word should be Gassoc or cassoc; assuming, therefore, that it was *cassock*—Mr. Percy found the initials of six persons, who stood high in Lord Oldborough's scale of probabilities.—Chelsea—Arnold—Skreene—Skipworth—Oldfield—Coleman—and the last, *k*, for which he hunted in vain a considerable time,

was supplied by Kensington, (Duke of Greenwich) whose name had been scratched out of the list, since his reconciliation and connexion by marriage with Lord Oldborough, but who had certainly at one time been of the league of his Lordship's enemies.—Every circumstance and date in the Tourville papers exactly agreed with this explanation: the Cassock thus composed cleared up all difficulties; and passages, that were before dark and mysterious, were rendered by this reading perfectly intelligible. The interpretation, when once given, appeared so simple, that Lord Oldborough wondered how it was possible, that it had not before occurred to his mind. His satisfaction was great—he was at this moment relieved from all danger of mistaking friend for foe, he felt that his enemies were in his power, and his triumph secure.

“My dear Sir,” cried he,—“You do not know, you cannot estimate, the ex-

tent of the service you have done me—far from wishing to lessen it in your eyes, I wish you to know at this moment it's full importance.—By Lady Oldborough's death and by circumstances, with which I need not trouble you—I lost the support of her connexions.—The Duke of Greenwich, though my relation, is a weak man, and a weak man can never be a good friend.—I was encompassed, undermined, the ground hollow under me—I knew it—but I could not put my finger upon one of the traitors.—Now I have them all at one blow, and I thank you for it.—I have the character, I believe, of being, what is called, proud, but you see that I am not too proud to be assisted and obliged, by one who will never allow me to oblige or assist him, or any of his family. But why should this be? Look over the list of these men.—In some one of these places of trust, give me a person in whom I can confide, a friend to me, and to your country.—

Look over that list, now in your hand, and put your finger upon any thing that will suit you."

"I thank you, my Lord," said Mr. Percy, "I feel the full value of your good opinion, and true gratitude for the warmth of your friendship, but I cannot accept of any office under your administration.—Our political principles differ as much, as our private sentiments of honor agree.—And these sentiments will, I trust, make you approve of what I now say—and do."

"But there are places, there are situations which you might accept, where your political opinions and mine could never clash. It is an extraordinary thing for a minister to press a gentleman to accept of a place, unless he expects more in return than what he gives.—But come—I must have Mr. Percy one of us.—You have never tried ambition yet," added Lord Oldborough, with a smile.—"Trust me, you would find ambition has it's pleasures, it's proud mo-

ments, when a man feels that he has his foot on the neck of his enemies."

Lord Oldborough stood, as if he felt this pride at the instant.—"You do not know the charms of ambition, Mr. Percy."

"It may be delightful to feel one's foot on the neck of one's enemies, but, for my part, I rather prefer having no enemies."

"No enemies," said Lord Oldborough—"Every man, that has character enough to make friends, has character enough to make enemies—and must have enemies—if not of his power or place, of his talents and property—the sphere lower, the passion's the same.—No enemies!—What is he, who has been at law with you, and has robbed you of your estate?"

"I forgot him—upon my word I forgot him," said Mr. Percy,—"*You see, my Lord, if he robbed me of my estate, he did not rob me of my peace of mind. —Does your Lordship think,*" said Mr.

Percy, smiling, "that any ambitious man, deprived of his place, could say as much?"

"When I can tell you that from my own experience, you shall know," said Lord Oldborough, replying in the same tone; "But, thanks to your discovery, there seems to be little chance, at present, of my being competent to answer that question.—But to business, we are wasting life."

Every word or action, that did not tend to a political purpose, appeared to Lord Oldborough to be a waste of life.

"Your ultimatum? Can you be one of us?"

"Impossible, my Lord. Pardon me if I say, that the nearer the view your confidence permits me to take of the workings of your powerful mind, and of the pains and penalties of your exalted situation, the more clearly I feel, that ambition is not for me, that my happiness lies in another line."

“ Enough—I have done—The subject is at rest between us for ever.”——

A cloud, followed instantaneously by a strong radiance of pleasure, passed across Lord Oldborough’s countenance, while he pronounced, as if speaking to himself, the words,

“ Singular obstinacy !——Admirable consistency !——And I too am consistent, my dear Sir,” said he, sitting down at the table,—“ Now for business, but I am deprived of my right hand.” He rang, and desired his Secretary, Mr. Temple, to be sent to him.—Mr. Percy rose to take leave, but Lord Oldborough would not permit him to go. “ I can have no secrets for you, Mr. Percy—stay and see the end of the Cassock.”

“ Mr. Temple came in; and Lord Oldborough, with that promptitude and decision by which he was characterized, dictated a letter to the King, laying before his Majesty the whole intrigue, as discovered by the Tourville papers, adding a list of the members of the

Cassock—concluding, by begging his Majesty's permission to resign, unless the cabal, which had rendered his efforts for the good of the country and for his Majesty's service in some points abortive, should be dismissed from his Majesty's councils.—In another letter to a private friend, who had access to the royal ear, Lord Oldborough named the persons, whom, if his Majesty should do him the favor of consulting him, he should wish to recommend in the places of those who might be dismissed. His Lordship further remarked, that the marriage which had taken place between his niece and the eldest son of the Duke of Greenwich, and the late proofs of his Grace's friendship, dissipated all fears and resentment arising from his former connexion with the *Cassock*.—Lord Oldborough therefore entreated his Majesty, to continue his Grace in the ministry. All this was stated in the shortest and plainest terms.

“ No rounded periods, *no phrases*, no

fine writing, Mr. Temple, upon this occasion, if you please ; it must be felt, that these letters are straight from my mind, and that if they are not written by my own hand, it is because that hand is disabled.—As soon as the gout will let me stir, I shall pay my duty to my sovereign in person. These arrangements will be completed, I trust, by the meeting of parliament.—In the mean time I am better here than in London, the blow will be struck, and none will know by whom—not but what I am ready to avow it, if called upon.—But—let the coffee-house politicians decide, and the country gentlemen prose upon it,” said Lord Oldborough, smiling,—“Some will say the ministry split on India affairs, some on Spanish, some on French affairs.—How little they, any of them, know what passes or what governs behind the curtain !—Let them talk—whilst I act.”

“The joy of this discovery so raised Lord Oldborough’s spirits, and dilated

his heart, that he threw himself open with a freedom and hilarity, and with a degree of humor unusual to him, and unknown except to the few in his most intimate confidence.——The letters finished, Mr. Temple was immediately despatched with them to town.

“There,” said Lord Oldborough, as soon as Mr. Temple had left him, “There’s a secretary I can depend upon, and there is another obligation I owe to your family—to your son Alfred.”—

Now this business of the Tourville papers was off his mind, Lord Oldborough, though not much accustomed to turn his attention to the lesser details of domestic life, spoke of every individual of the Percy family with whom he was acquainted; and, in particular, of Godfrey, to whom he was conscious that he had been unjust.—Mr. Percy, to relieve him from this regret, talked of the pleasure his son had had in his friend Gascoigne’s late promotion to the Lieute-

nant-Colonelcy. Whilst Mr. Percy spoke, Lord Oldborough searched, among a packet of letters, for one which made honorable mention of Captain Percy, and put it into the hands of the happy father.

“ Ah, these are pleasurable feelings denied to me,”—said Lord Oldborough—

After a pause he added,

“ That nephew of mine, Colonel Hutton, is irretrievably profligate, selfish, insignificant—I look to my niece, the Marchioness of Twickenham’s child, that is to say, if the mother”

Another long pause, during which his Lordship rubbed the glasses of his spectacles, and looked through them, as if intent that no speck should remain: while he did this very slowly, his mind ran rapidly from the idea of the Marchioness of Twickenham to John Falconer, and thence to all the causes of distrust and discontent, which his Lordship felt towards all the different indivi-

duals of the Falconer family. He considered, that now the Tourville papers had been completely deciphered, the necessity for engaging the secrecy of the Commissioner, and of his son Cunningham, would soon cease.

Lord Oldborough's reverie was interrupted by seeing, at this instant, the Commissioner returning from his ride.

"Not a word, Mr. Percy, of what has passed between us, to Commissioner Falconer," said his Lordship—"Not a word of the *Gassoc*. I put you on your guard, because you live with those in whom you have entire confidence," said Lord Oldborough,—“but that is what a public man, a minister, cannot do.—”

Another reason why I should not like to be a minister, thought Mr. Percy—“I took it for granted, that the Commissioner was entirely in your Lordship's confidence.”

“I thought you were too good a philosopher, to take any thing for granted, Mr. Percy.—Consider, if you please,

that I am in a situation where I must have tools, and use them, as long as I can make them serviceable to my purposes.—Sir, I am not a missionary, but a minister.—I must work with men, and upon men, such as I find them. I am not a chemist, to analyse and purify the gold. I make no objection to that alloy, which I am told is necessary, and fits it for being moulded to my purposes.—But here comes the ductile Commissioner.”

Lord Oldborough began to talk to him of the borough, without any mercy for his curiosity, and without any attempt to evade the various dexterous pushes he made, to discover the business which had this morning occupied his Lordship. Mr. Percy was surprised, in the course of this day, to see the manner in which the Commissioner, a gentleman well-born, of originally independent fortune and station, humbled and abased himself to a patron. Mr. Falconer had contracted a certain cringing servility of

manner, which completely altered his whole appearance, and which quite prevented him even from looking like a gentleman. It was his principle never to contradict a great man, never to give him any sort of pain; and his idea of the deference due to rank, and of the danger of losing favor by giving offence, was carried so far, that not only his attitude and language, but his whole mind seemed to be new modified. He had not the free use of his faculties. He seemed really so to subdue and submit his powers, that his understanding was annihilated.—Mr. Percy was astonished at the change in his cousin; the Commissioner was equally surprised, nay, actually astonished, by Mr. Percy's freedom and boldness.—“ Good Heavens ! how can you speak in this manner ? ” said Mr. Falconer, as they were going down stairs together, after parting with Lord Oldborough.—“ And why not ? — I have nothing to fear or to hope, nothing to gain or to lose.—Lord Oldborough can

give me nothing that I would accept, but his esteem, and that I am sure of never losing."

Heigho!—If I had your favor with my Lord, what I would make of it! thought the Commissioner, as he stepped into his chariot. Mr. Percy mounted his horse, and rode back to his humble home, glad to have done his friend Lord Oldborough a service, still more glad that he was not bound to the minister by any of the chains of patronage.—Rejoiced to quit Tourville papers—state intrigues—lists of enemies,—and all the necessity for reserve and *management*, and all the turmoil of ambition.

CHAPTER XXV.

COUNT ALTENBERG arrived at Clermont park, and as Lord Oldborough was still confined by the gout, Commissioner Falconer, to his Lady's infinite satisfaction, was deputed to show him every thing that was worth seeing in this part of the country. Every morning some party was formed by Mrs. Falconer, and so happily arranged, that her Georgiana and the Count were necessarily thrown together. The Count rode extremely well; Miss Falconers had been taught to ride in a celebrated riding house, and were delighted to display their equestrian graces. When they were not disposed to ride—the Count had a phaeton, and Mrs. Falconer a barouche; and either in

the phaeton, or the barouche seat, Miss Georgiana Falconer was seated with the Count, who, as she discovered, drove uncommonly well.

The Count had expressed a desire to see the place where M. de Tourville had been shipwrecked, and he really wished to be introduced to the Percy family, of whom, from the specimen he had seen in Alfred, and from all the hospitality they had shown the distressed mariners (some of whom were his countrymen), he had formed a favorable opinion. Half his wish was granted, the rest dispersed in empty air. Mrs. Falconer with alacrity arranged a party for Percy-Hall, to show the Count the scene of the Shipwreck—“She should be so glad to see it herself, for she was absent from the country, at the time of the sad disaster; but the Commissioner, who knew the spot, and all the circumstances, better than any other person, would show them every thing—and Sir Robert Percy, she was

sure, would think himself much honored by Count Altenberg's visiting his place."

Count Altenberg had some confused recollection of Mr. Alfred Percy's having told him, that his father no longer lived at Percy-Hall; but this speech of Mrs. Falconer's led the Count to believe, that he had misunderstood what Alfred had said.—

The party arranged for Percy-Hall consisted of the Miss Falconers, the two Lady Arlingtons, and some other young people, who were at Falconer Court.— It was a fine morning, Mrs. Falconer was all suavity and smiles, both the Miss Falconers in charming hopes, and consequently in charming spirits.—

Percy-Hall was really a beautiful place, and Miss Arabella Falconer now looked at it with the pleasure of anticipated possession. Sir Robert Percy was not at home, he had been obliged that morning to attend on some special business; but he had left orders with his steward and

house-keeper, to show the party of visitors the house and grounds. In going through the apartments, they came to the gallery leading to the library, where they were stopped by some workmen's trestles, on which were lying two painted glass windows, one that had been taken down, and another, which was to be put in it's stead. Whilst the workmen were moving the obstacles out of the way, the company had leisure to admire the painted windows. One of them was covered with coats of arms: the other represented the fire at Percy-Hall, and the portrait of Caroline, assisting the old nurse down the staircase. This painting immediately fixed Count Altenberg's eye, and Miss Georgiana Falconer, not knowing whose portrait it was, exclaimed, as she looked at the figure of Caroline, " Beautiful !—Exquisite ! What a lovely creature, that is assisting the old woman !"

" Yes," said Count Altenberg, " it is

one of the finest countenances, I ever beheld !”

All the Ladies eagerly pressed forward to look at it.

“ Beautiful !—Don’t you think it is something like Lady Anne Cope ?”—said Miss Falconer.

“ Oh, dear, no !” cried Miss Georgiana Falconer, “ it is a great deal handsomer than any of the Copes ever were, or ever will be !”—

“ It has a look of Lady Mary Nesbitt,” said one of the Lady Arlingtons. —

“ The eyes are so like Lady Coningsby, who is my delight,” said Georgiana.

“ And it has quite the Arlington nose,” said Mrs. Falconer, glancing her eye upon the Lady Arlingtons. Count Altenberg, without moving his eye, repeated,

“ It is the most beautiful face, I ever beheld.”

“Not nearly so beautiful as the original, Sir,”—said the painter.

“The original?—Is it a copy?”

“A portrait, Sir.”—

“Oh, a family portrait of one of our great, great grand-mother Percies, I suppose,” said Miss Georgiana, “done in her youth—in a fancy piece you know, according to the taste of those times—She must have been superlatively lovely.”

“Ma’am,” said the painter, “the young lady, of whom this is a portrait, is, I hope and believe, now living.”—

“Where?—And who can she be?—for I am sure I don’t recollect ever having seen her in all my life—never met her in Town any where. . . . Pray Sir, who may it be?”—added she, turning to the artist, with a mixture of affected negligence, and real pride.

“Miss Caroline Percy, Ma’am.”

“A daughter of Sir Robert Percy—of

the gentleman of this house" said Count Altenberg eagerly.

Mrs. Falconer, and her daughter, Georgiana, answered rapidly, with looks of alarm, as they stood a little behind the Count.

"Oh!—no, no, Count Altenberg," cried Mrs. Falconer, advancing—"Not a daughter of the gentleman of this house. Another family, relations, but distant relations of the Commissioner's—he formerly knew something of them, but *we* know nothing of them."

The painter however knew a great deal, and seemed anxious to tell all he knew: but Mrs. Falconer walked on immediately, saying,

"This is our way, is not it? This leads to the library, where, I dare say, we shall find the book which the Count wanted"—The Count heard her not, for with his eyes fixed on the picture he was listening to the account, which the painter was giving of the circumstance it recorded

of the fire at Percy-Hall.—Of the presence of mind and humanity of Miss Caroline Percy, who had saved the life of the poor decrepit woman, who in the picture was represented as leaning upon her arm.—The painter paused, when he came to this part of his story——“That woman, was my mother, Sir,”——He went on, and with all the eloquence of filial affection and of gratitude, pronounced in a few words a panegyric on the family, who had been his first, and his best benefactors——All who heard him were touched with his honest warmth, except the Miss Falconers.

“I dare say *those* Percies were very good people in their day,” said Miss Falconer, “but their day is over, and no doubt you’ll find, in the present possessor of the estate, Sir, as good a patron at least.”

The artist took up his pencil without making any reply, and went on with some heraldic devices he was painting.

“ I am amazed, how you could see any likeness in that face or figure to Lady Anne Cope, or Lady Mary Nesbitt, or any of the Arlingtons,” said Miss Georgiana Falconer, looking through her hand at the portrait of Caroline. . . .

“ It’s the most beautiful thing I ever saw certainly, but there’s nothing of an air of fashion, and without that,” . . .

“ Count Altenberg, I have found for you the very book, I heard you tell the Commissioner last night you wished so much to see,” said Mrs. F. The Count went forward to receive the book, and to thank the lady for her polite attention;—she turned over the leaves, and showed him some uncommonly fine prints, which he was bound to admire—and whilst he was admiring, Mrs. Falconer found a moment to whisper to her daughter Georgiana.

“ Not a word more about the picture—Let it alone, and it is only a picture,—dwell upon it, and you make it a reality.”——

Miss Georgiana had quickness and ability, sufficient to feel the value of her mother's knowledge of the world, and of human nature; but she had seldom sufficient command of temper, to imitate or to profit by Mrs. Falconer's address. On this occasion she contented herself with venting her spleen on the poor painter, whose coloring and drapery she began to criticise unmercifully.—Mrs. Falconer, however, carried off the Count with her into the library, and kept him there, till the Commissioner, who had been detained in the neighbouring village by some electioneering business, arrived; and then they pursued their walk together through the park.—Miss Falconer was particularly delighted with the beauties of the grounds. Miss Georgiana, recovering her good humor, was again charming—and all went on well; till they came near the seashore, and the Count asked Commissioner Falconer, “to show him the place where the shipwreck had happened.”—She was pro-

voked, that his attention should be withdrawn from her, and again by these Percies.—The Commissioner called to one of the boatmen, who had been ordered to be in readiness, and asked him, “to point out the place, where the Dutch vessel had been wrecked.”—The man, who seemed rather surly, replied, “that they could not see the right place where they stood, and if they had a mind to see it, they must come into the boat, and row *a piece* up farther.”——

Now some of these town bred ladies were alarmed at the idea of going to sea, and though Miss Georgiana was very unwilling to be separated from the Count, and though her mother encouraged the young lady to vanquish her fears as much by precept and as little by example as possible, yet when she was to be handed into the boat, she drew back in pretty terror, put her hands before her face, and protested she could not venture even with Count Altenberg.—After as

much waste of words, as the discussion of such arrangements on a party of pleasure usually involves, it was at length settled, that only the Commissioner should accompany the Count, that the rest of the gentlemen and ladies should pursue their walk, and that they should all meet again at the park gate.—The surly boatman rowed off, but he soon ceased to be surly, when the Count spoke of the humanity and hospitality, which had been shown to some of his countrymen by Mr. Percy. Immediately the boatman's tongue was loosed.—

“Why, ay, Sir, if you bees curious about *that* there gentleman, I can tell you a deal about him. But them as comes to see the new man does not covet to hear talk of the old master—but nevertheless, there's none like him,—he gave me and wife that there white cottage yonder, half ways up the bank, where you see the smoke rising between the trees—as snug a cottage it is! But

that is no matter to you, Sir.—But I wish you had but *seed* him the night of the shipwreck, he and his sons, God above bless him, and them—wherever they are, if they're above ground, I'd row out the worst night ever we had, to set my eyes on them again before I die, but for a minute.—Ay, that night of the shipwreck, not a man was willing to go out with them, or could be got out the first turn, but myself” . . .

Upon this text he spoke at large, entering into a most circumstantial and diffuse history of the shipwreck, mingling his own praises with those which he heartily bestowed upon the Percies of the right good old branch. Commissioner Falconer mean time was not in a condition to throw in any thing in favor of his new friend Sir Robert Percy; he was taking pinch after pinch of snuff, looking alternately at the water and the boat, sitting stiffly upright in anxious silence. Although in the incessant practice of suppressing his own feelings, cor-

poreal and mental, from respect or complaisance to his superiors in rank and station, yet he presently found it beyond the utmost efforts of his courtly philosophy, to endure his qualms of mind and body. Interrupting the talkative boatman, he first conjured the orator to mind what he was about; at last, Mr. Falconer complaining of growing very sick, the Count gave up all thoughts of proceeding further, and begged the boatmen to put them ashore as soon as they could. They landed near the village, which it was necessary that they should pass through, before they could reach the appointed place of meeting. The poor Commissioner, whose stomach was still disordered, and whose head was giddy, observed that they had yet a long walk to take, and proposed sending for one of the carriages—accordingly they waited for it at the village inn. The Commissioner, after having made a multitude of apologies to the Count, retired to rest himself—during his absence the

Count, who, wherever he was, endeavored to see as much as possible of the manners of the people, began talking to the landlord and landlady.—Again the conversation turned upon the characters of the late and the present possessors of Percy-Hall; and the good people, by all the anecdotes they told, and still more by the affection and warm attachment they expressed for the old banished family, increased every moment his desire to be personally acquainted with those, who in adversity were preferred to persons in present power and prosperity.—Count Altenberg, young as he was, had seen enough of the world to feel the full value of eulogiums bestowed on those who are poor, and who have no means of serving in any way the interests of their panegyrists.

When the carriage came, and the Commissioner was sufficiently refitted for conversation, the Count repeatedly expressed his earnest wish to become acquainted with that Mr. Percy and his

family, to whom his countrymen had been so much obliged, and of whom he said he had this morning heard so many interesting anecdotes.—The Commissioner had not been present when the Count saw the picture of Caroline, nor indeed did he enter into Mrs. Falconer's matrimonial designs for her daughter Georgiana. The Commissioner generally saw the folly, and despaired of the success of all castle-building but his own, and his castles in the air were always on a political plan. So without difficulty he immediately replied, that nothing would give him more pleasure, than to introduce the Count to his relations, the Percies.—The moment this was mentioned, however, to Mrs. Falconer, the Commissioner saw through the complacent countenance, with which she forced herself to listen to him, that he had made some terrible blunder, for which he should have to answer in private.

Accordingly the first moment they were alone, Mrs. Falconer reproached

him with the rash promise he had made. "I shall have all the difficulty in the world, to put this out of the Count's head. I thought Mr. Falconer, that you had agreed to let *those* Percies drop."

"So I would if I could, my dear; but how can I, when Lord Oldborough persists in holding them up?—You must go and see them, my dear."

"I!" cried Mrs. Falconer, with a look of horror—"I!—not I! indeed—Lord Oldborough holds up only the gentlemen of the family—his Lordship has nothing to do with the ladies, I suppose. Now, you know visiting can go on vastly well to all eternity, between the gentlemen of a family, without the ladies having any sort of intimacy or acquaintance even.—You and Mr. Percy . . . if it is necessary for appearance' sake with Lord Oldborough, may continue upon the old footing; but I charge you, Commissioner, do not involve me—and what-

ever happens, don't take Count Altenberg with you to the Hills."—

"Why not, my dear?"

"My dear, I have my reasons.—You were not in the gallery at Percy-Hall this morning, when the Count saw that painted glass window?"—

The Commissioner begged an explanation, but when he had heard all Mrs. Falconer's reasons, they did not seem to strike him with the force she desired and expected.—

"I will do as you please, my dear," said he, "and if I can, I will make the Count forget my promised introduction to the Percies; but all the time depend upon it your fears and your hopes are both equally vain. You ladies are apt to take it for granted, that men's heads are always running on love."

"Young men's heads sometimes are," said Mrs. Falconer.

"Very seldom in these days," said the Commissioner. "And love altoge-

ther, as one should think you might know by this time, Mrs. Falconer,—a sensible woman of the world, as you are,—but no woman, even the most sensible, can ever believe it Love altogether has surprisingly little to do, in the real management and business of the world.”

“ Surprisingly little,” replied Mrs. Falconer, placidly. “ But seriously, my dear, here is an opportunity of making an excellent match for Georgiana, if you will be so obliging as not to counteract me.”

“ I am the last man in the world to counteract you, my dear ; but it will never do,” said Mr. Falconer, “ and you will only make Georgiana ridiculous, as she has been several times already, from the failure of these love-matches.—I tell you, Mrs. Falconer, Count Altenberg is no more thinking of love than I am—nor is he a man in the least likely to fall in love.”

“ He is more than half in love with

my Georgiana already," said the mother, "if I have any eyes."

"You have eyes, and very fine eyes, my dear, as every body knows, and no one better than myself—they have but one defect."

"Defect!"

"They sometimes see more than exists."

"You would not be so incredulous, Mr. Falconer, if you had seen the rapture, with which the Count listens to Georgiana when she plays on the harp.—He is prodigiously fond of music."

"And of painting too," said the Commissioner, "for by your account of the matter, he seemed to be more than half in love also with a picture yesterday morning."

"A picture is no very dangerous rival, except in a *modern novel*," replied Mrs. Falconer.—"But beware, Commissioner—and remember, I understand these things; I warn you in time, beware of the original of that picture, and

never again talk to me of going to see those Percies; for though the girl may be only an unfashioned country beauty, and Georgiana has so many polished advantages, yet there is no knowing what whim a young man might take into his head."

The Commissioner, though he remained completely of his own opinion, that Mrs. Falconer's scheme for Georgiana would never do, disputed the point no farther, but left the room, promising all she required, for promises cost him nothing. To do him justice he recollected and endeavored to the best of his power to keep his promise, for the next morning he took his time so well to propose a ride to the Hills, just at the moment when Lord Oldborough and the Count were deep in a conversation on the state of continental politics, that his Lordship would not part with him—The Commissioner paid his visit alone; and Mrs. Falconer gave him credit for his address; but scarcely had she con-

gratulated herself, when she was thrown again into terror——The Commissioner had suggested to Lord Oldborough the propriety and policy of giving, whilst he was in the country, a *popularity-ball*——His Lordship assented, and Mrs. Falconer, as usual, was to take the trouble off his hands, and to give an entertainment to his Lordship's friends.—Lord Oldborough had not yet recovered from the gout, and he was glad to accept of her offer: his Lordship not being able to appear, or to do the honors of the fête, was a sufficient apology for his not giving it at Clermont-Park.

The obsequious Commissioner begged to have a list of any friends, whom Lord Oldborough particularly wished to have invited, but his Lordship, with a look of absence replied, that he left all that entirely to Mrs. Falconer; however, the very evening of the day on which the Commissioner paid his visit alone at the Hills, Lord Oldborough put into his hands a list of the friends who he wished should be

invited to the ball, and at the head of his list were the Percies.

“The Percies ! the very people I first thought of,” said Mr. Falconer, commanding his countenance carefully—but I fear we cannot hope to have them, they are at such a distance, and they have no carriage.”

“Any of my carriages, all of them, shall be at their command,” said Lord Oldborough.

He rang instantly, and gave orders accordingly.

The Commissioner reported this to Mrs. Falconer, observing, that he had gone to the very brink of offending Lord Oldborough to oblige her, as he knew, by his Lordship’s look and tone of voice; and that nothing now could be done, but to visit the Percies, and as soon as possible, and to send them a card of invitation for the ball.

“And, my dear, whatever you do, I am sure will be done with a good grace,” added the Commissioner, observing that

his Lady looked excessively discomfited.

“ Very well, Commissioner, you will have your daughter upon your hands, that’s all.”

“ I should be as sorry for that, my Love, as you could be ; but what can be done ?—We must not lose the substance, in running after the shadow.—Lord Oldborough might turn short round upon us.”—

“ Not the least likely upon such a trifling occasion as this, where no politics are in question. What can Mrs. or Miss Percies’ being or not being at this ball signify to Lord Oldborough—a man, who never in his life thought of balls, or cared any thing about women, and these are women whom he has never seen.—What interest can it possibly be of Lord Oldborough’s ?”

“ I cannot tell you, my dear—I don’t see any immediate interest.—But there’s an old private friendship in the case.—Some way or other, I declare I cannot

tell you how that old cousin Percy of mine has contrived to get nearer to Lord Oldborough than any one living ever could do—nearer to his heart.”

“Heart!—Private friendship!”—repeated Mrs. Falconer, with a tone of ineffable contempt. “Well, I only wish you had said nothing about the matter to Lord Oldborough, I could have managed it myself.—Was there ever such want of address!—When you saw the Percies at the head of the list, was that a time to say any thing about your fears of their not coming?—Do you think Lord Oldborough could not translate fears into hopes?—Then to mention their having no carriages!—when, if you had kept your own counsel, that would have been our sufficient excuse at last.—They must have refused; nothing need have been said about it till the night of the ball.—And I would lay my life, Lord Oldborough would never, in the mean time, have thought of it, or of them.—But so silly!

to object in that way, when you know that the slightest contradiction wakens Lord Oldborough's will ; and then indeed you might as well talk to his own Jupiter tonans.—If his Lordship had set a beggar-woman's name at the head of his list, and you had objected that she had no carriage, he would directly have answered—‘ she shall have mine.’—Bless me !—It's wonderful that people can pique themselves on address, and have so little knowledge of character.”

“ My dear,” said the Commissioner, “ if you reproach me from this time till to-morrow, the end of the matter will be, that you must go and see the Percies.”—“ I say, Mrs. Falconer,” added he, assuming a peremptory tone, for which he had acquired a taste from Lord Oldborough, but had seldom courage or opportunity to indulge in it,—“ I say, Mrs. Falconer, the thing must be done.”—He rang the bell in a gloriously authoritative manner, and ordered the carriage.

A visit paid thus upon compulsion was not likely to be very agreeable, but the complaints against the roads—the dreadful distance, and the horrid necessity of being civil, need not be recorded. Miss Falconers exclaimed, when they at last came to the Hills,—“La! I did not think it was so tolerable a place!—Miss Georgiana hoped that they should, at least, see Miss Caroline Percy—she owned she was curious to see that beautiful original, of whom the painter at Percy-Hall, and her brother Buckhurst, had said so much.”

Mrs. Percy and Rosamond only were at home. Caroline had taken a walk with her father to a considerable distance.

Mrs. Falconer, who had, by this time, completely recovered her self-command, presented herself with such smiling grace, and expressed, in such a tone of cordiality, her earnest desire, now that she had been so happy as to get into the country, to enjoy the society of her friends and re-

lations, that Rosamond was quite charmed into a belief of at least half of what she said.—Rosamond was willing to attribute all that had appeared, particularly of late, in contradiction of this lady's present professions, to some political motives of Commissioner Falconer, whom she disliked for his conduct to Buckhurst, and whom she was completely willing to give up, as a worldly-minded courtier.—But whilst the manners of the mother operated thus with Rosamond in favor of her moral character, even Rosamond's easy faith, and sanguine benevolence, could not see or hear any thing from the daughters, that confirmed Mrs. Falconer's flattering speeches; they sat in languid silence, looking upon the animate and inanimate objects in the room with the same air of supercilious listlessness. They could not speak so as to be heard, they could not really understand any thing that Rosamond said to them; they seemed as if their bodies had been brought in-

to the room by mistake, and their souls left behind them ; not that they were in the least timid, or abashed ; no, they seemed fully satisfied with their own inanity, and proud to show, that they had absolutely no ideas in common with those, into whose company they had been thus unfortunately compelled. Once or twice they turned their heads with some signs of vivacity, when the door opened, and when they expected to see Miss Caroline Percy enter : but though the visit was protracted, in hopes of her return, yet at last they were obliged to depart without having their curiosity satisfied.

Mrs. Falconer's fears of rivalry for her Georgiana were not diminished by this visit. By those of the family whom she saw this day, she judged of Caroline, whom she had not seen ; and she had tact sufficient to apprehend, that the conversation and manners of Mrs. Percy and of Rosamond were such, as might,

perhaps, please a well-bred and well-informed foreigner, better, even, than the fashionable tone and air of the day, of which he had not been long enough in England to appreciate the conventional value. Still Mrs. Falconer had a lingering hope, that some difficulties about dress, or some happy cold, might prevent these dangerous Percies from accepting the invitation to the ball.—When their answers to her card came, she gave one hasty glance at it.

“Will do themselves the honor”——

“My dear, you are alarming yourself unnecessarily,” cried the Commissioner, who pitied the distress visible, at least to his eyes, in her countenance, or who feared, perhaps, a renewal of reproaches for his own want of address—

“Quite unnecessarily, believe me—I have had a great deal of conversation with Count Altenberg since I spoke of him to you last, and I am confirmed in my opinion, that he merely feels the

curiosity natural to an enlightened traveller, to become acquainted with Mr. Percy, a man, who has been described to him as a person of abilities.—And he wants to thank him in the name of his countrymen, who were assisted, you know I told you, by the Percies, at the time of the shipwreck.—You will see, my dear, that the ladies of the family will be nothing to him.”

Mrs. Falconer sighed, and bit her lips.

“ In half an hour’s conversation, I would engage to find out the ruling passion of any man, young or old.—Now, remember I tell you, Mrs. Falconer, Count Altenberg’s ruling passion is ambition.”

“ Ruling passion,” repeated Mrs. Falconer—One of your book-words, and book-notions, that are always misleading you in practice.—Ruling passion. Metaphysical nonsense! As if men were such consistent creatures, as to be ruled

regularly by one passion—when often ten different passions pull a man, even before your face, ten different ways, and one cannot tell one hour what will be the ruling passion of the next.—Tell me the reigning fashion, and I will tell you the ruling passion.—Luckily,” continued Mrs. Falconer, after a pause of deep consideration—“Georgiana is very fashionable—one of the most fashionable young women in England, as the Count might have seen when he was in London . . . But then, on the other hand, whether he is judge enough of English manners Georgiana must be well dressed . . . and I know the Count’s taste in dress; I have made myself mistress of that—Commissioner, I must trouble you for some money.”

“Mrs. Falconer. I have no money—And if I had,” said the Commissioner, who always lost his temper when that subject was touched upon—“If I had, I would not give it you to throw away

upon such a losing game . . . a nonsensical speculation!—Georgiana has not the least chance, nor has any other English woman, were she as handsome as Venus and dressed in bank notes—Why, Mrs. Falconer, since you put me in a passion, I must tell you a secret.”

But checking himself, Mr. Falconer stood for a moment silent, and went on with “Count Altenberg has made up his quarrel with the hereditary Prince, and I have it from undoubted authority, that he is to be the Prince’s prime minister, when he comes to the throne; and the present Prince you know, as Cunningham says, is so infirm and asthmatic, that he may be carried off at any moment.”—

“Very well . . . very likely . . . I am glad of it,” said Mrs. Falconer—“But where’s the secret?”

“I’ve thought better of that, and I cannot tell it you—But this much

I tell you positively, Mrs. Falconer, that you will lose your labor, if you speculate upon the Count for Georgiana."

"Is he married?—Answer me that question, and I will ask no more—And that I have a right to ask."

"No—not married—But I can tell no more.—Only let me beg, that you will just put all love notions out of Georgiana's head and your own, or you'll make the girl ridiculous, and expose yourself, my dear. But, on the other hand, let there be no deficiency of attention to the Count, for all our civilities to him will pay a hundred fold, and, perhaps, sooner than you expect—for he may be prime minister and prime favorite at Cunningham's court in a month, and of course will have it in his power to forward Cunningham's interests.—That is what I look to, Mrs. Falconer, for I am long-sighted in my views, as you will find."

“ Well ! time will show—I am glad you tell me he positively is not married,” concluded Mrs. Falconer—“ As to the rest, we shall see.”——

END OF VOL. II.

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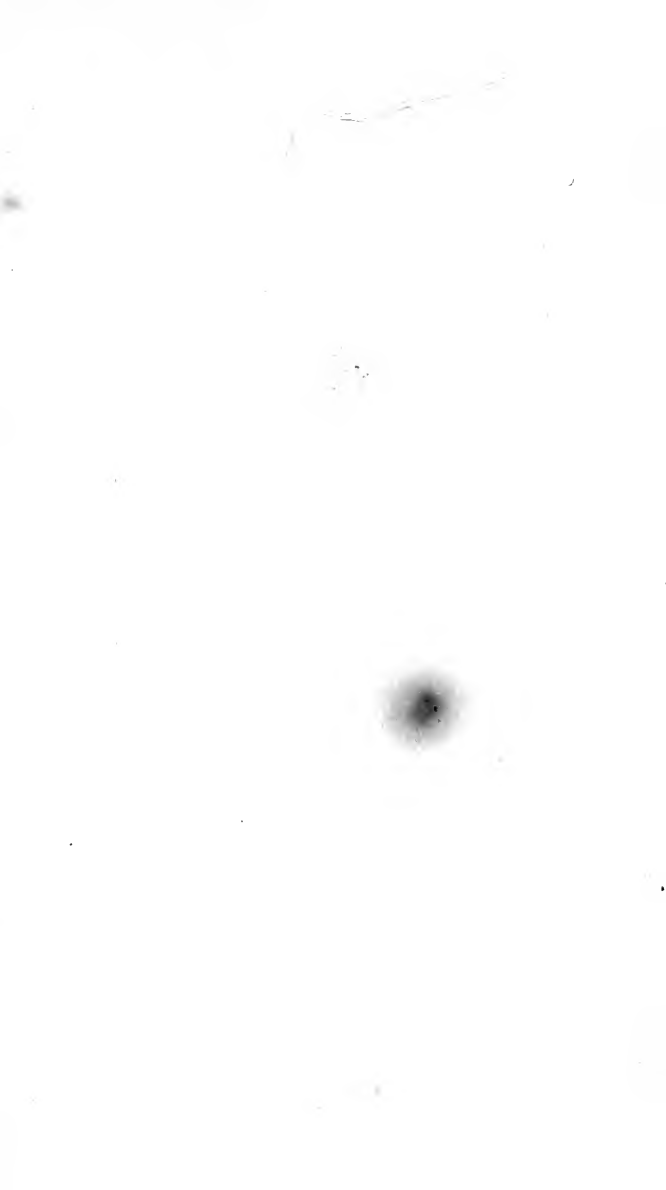
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